National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Services des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

CANADIAN THESES
THÈSES CANADIENNES

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30.

THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

Canada

NL-339 (r.86/06)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN SHARED BIG BOOK EXPERIENCES

by

James Glenn Anderson

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1987

Permission has been granted to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author (copyright owner) has reserved other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her written permission.

L'autorisation a été accordée à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur (titulaire du droit d'auteur) se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation écrite.

ISBN 0-315-37604-X

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: James Glenn Anderson

TITLE OF THESIS: Cognitive and Social Interactions in Shared Big Book Experiences

DEGREE: Ph.D.

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1987

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

Jim Anderson

P.O. Box 250
Spaniard's Bay, Newfoundland
Canada
AOA 3XO

Date: 13 April 1987

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Cognitive and Social Interactions in Shared Big Book Experiences", submitted by James Glenn Anderson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

W Fagan
.....
Supervisor

Lorraine Everett-Turner
.....

Ruth Dayton
.....

Jean Stuart
.....

Joyce Edwards
.....

Ruth Fagan
.....
External Examiner

Date: Oct. 20/86

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents and to my daughter, Terri.

ABSTRACT

Research has shown that many children learn to read prior to coming to school. A characteristic common to most of these children is that they have been read to by an adult or older sibling and have been invited to share in the reading. In an attempt to emulate this model of learning to read, the shared big book experience has recently been developed and is currently being used by many teachers as a substantive part of beginning reading programs.

The purpose of this study was to describe and interpret interactions within shared big book experiences in two grade one classrooms using the framework of a qualitative research paradigm. Big book experiences were observed and recorded two days per week in each of the classrooms over most of the first term of the school year. Verbatim transcriptions of the recorded data were made and a codification scheme was developed based on the observed data and on the research on shared reading in the home.

The data revealed that a variety of different forms of interactions were evident in each of the sets of the big book experiences. In both classrooms, the focus was on text and memory of specifics of text. Although some of the features of shared reading in the home were evident in the shared big book experiences in the classroom, there were many differences between the findings of this study and the findings of research on shared reading in the home. Likewise, although there were similarities between shared reading experiences in each of the classrooms, there were also many differences.

Considerations are offered for those proposing the utilization of shared big book experiences as a beginning reading program; implications for further research and for teachers and other educators are presented.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere appreciation is extended to Dr. William T. Fagan, my supervisor, for his support, encouragement, and direction throughout all phases of the study. I am especially grateful for the expediency with which he dealt with all aspects of the study. Most of all, I appreciate the manner in which Bill demonstrated that one could be an excellent teacher and a close friend simultaneously.

I am also grateful for the support and encouragement provided by Dr. Lorene Everett-Turner and Dr. Fern Snart, the members of my supervisory committee. I especially appreciated their input into the formulating and clarifying of the research methodology.

Dr. Joyce Edwards and Dr. Ruth Hayden, as examiners, helped clarify and extend my thinking through their constructive questioning and for that I thank them.

I would also like to thank Dr. Ruth Eagen, the external examiner, for her warmth , encouragement and valuable feedback.

Very special thanks are extended to Mrs. Anthony and Mrs. Windsor and the children involved in the study for allowing me into their classrooms. Without their cooperation this study would not have been possible.

A number of friends also helped in various ways and I would like to thank:

- Ruth Hayden for many insightful conversations during the formulation of the study.

- Doo Bon Pae and Somsak Boonsathorn for their friendship and for providing valuable cross-cultural insights.

- Anne Brailsford, Jan Coles, Marie Hauk and Jan Vallance for their

friendship and support.

- Dr. Daiyo Sawada for his encouragement and for many stimulating conversations.

Finally, very special thanks are extended to my wife Ann for her friendship, encouragment and love throughout this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	The Problem	1
	Focus Of The Study	5
	Purposes Of The Study	7
	Significance Of The Study	7
II	RELATED LITERATURE	9
	Developments In Teaching Reading	9
	Theoretical Framework	15
	Mediation and Learning	15
	Mediated Learning and Emergent Literacy	19
	Intentionality	19
	Transcendence	21
	Assignment of Meaning	24
	Mediating for Competence	26
	Regulation of Behaviour	28
	Reading as a Social Process	30
	Reading and Learning to Read at Home: The Social Context	31
	Reading and Learning to Read in School: The Social Context	34
	Framework for the Study	37
	Conclusion	38
III	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	39
	Introduction	39
	The Significance of Qualitative Research	40
	Foreshadowed Problems	42
	Making Contacts	42

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Narrowing the Focus	44
	Data Collection	45
	Participant Observation	45
	Fieldnotes	46
	Videotaping	47
	Investigator's Journal	49
	Interviews	49
	Rating Scale	50
	Data Analysis	51
	Validity and Reliability	54
	Triangulation	54
	Fidelity	54
	Peer Consultation	55
	Inter-rater Reliability	55
	Summary	55
IV	THE CONTEXT : FREEDOMS AND CONSTRAINTS	56
	Setting I (Riverview)	56
	Riverview School	56
	The Classroom	56
	The Children	57
	Mrs. Anthony	57
	Formats, Accessibility, and Selection of Big Books	58
	Formats	58
	Genre	58
	Selection	59
	Organizing the Big Book Experience	59

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Purposes of the Big Book Experience	59
	Developing the Big Book Experience	60
	Participants and the Big Book Experience	63
	Control	63
	Degree of Teacher Control Through Allocation of Talk Time	64
	Control Through Relational Meaning	65
	Control Through Selection of Children	67
	Setting II (Parkdale)	70
	Parkdale School	70
	The Classroom	71
	The Children	71
	Mrs. Windsor	72
	Formats, Accessibility, and Selection of Big Books	73
	Formats	73
	Genre	73
	Selection	73
	Organizing the Big Book Experience	74
	Purposes of the Big Book Experience	74
	Developing the Big Book Experience	75
	Participants and the Big Book Experience	78
	Control	78
	Degree of Control Through the Allocation of Talk Time	78
	Control Through Relational Meaning	78
	Control Through Selection of Children	81
	Summary	83

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
V	MRS. ANTHONY'S CLASS	85
	Reader Participation	85
	Sharing Big Books	85
	Related Reading Activities	89
	Nature of Children's Reading	91
	Sharing Big Books	92
	Related Reading Activities	94
	Interactive Behaviours - Questioning	95
	Sharing Big Books	96
	Related Reading Activities	98
	Other Interactive Behaviours	99
	Prediction	99
	Transcendence	99
	Elaboration	100
	Clarification	100
	Prompting/Cueing	100
	Mediation for Competency	101
	Directions Related to Reading	101
	Confirmation	102
	Non-confirmation	102
	Establishment of Meaning Prior to Reading	102
	Specification	102
	Sharing Big Books	103
	Related Reading Activities	106
	Attention to Input	106
	Letters and Words	107

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Graphophonic Information	107
	Illustrations	108
	Correction of Miscues	108
	Booklike Language	109
	Sharing Big Books	110
	Related Reading Activities	114
	Developing Concepts of Reading	116
	Development and Display of Sense of Reading	117
	Mrs. Anthony's Demonstration of Concepts of Reading	117
	Reading is Meaningful	117
	Reading is Saying Words	118
	Reading is a Precise Activity	119
	Reading is Sounding Out Words	119
	Children's Concepts of Reading	120
	Reading is Something I Can Do	121
	Reading is Sounding Out Words	122
	I Read at Home and at School	122
	I Like Reading (Generally)	122
	Children's Concepts of Big Books	123
	Summary	124
VI	MRS. WINDSOR'S CLASS	127
	Reader Participation	127
	Sharing Big Books	127
	Sharing Small Books	131
	Related Reading Activities	133
	Nature of Children's Reading	136

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Sharing Big Books	136
	Sharing Small Books	138
	Related Reading Activities	138
	Interactive Behaviours - Questioning	139
	Sharing Big Books	139
	Sharing Small Books	141
	Related Reading Activities	142
	Other Interactive Behaviours	144
	Sharing Big Books	144
	Sharing Small Books	146
	Related Reading Activities	151
	Attention to Input	152
	Sharing Big Books	152
	Sharing Small Books	155
	Related Reading Activities	158
	Mrs. Windsor's Demonstration of Concepts of Reading	160
	Reading Makes Sense	160
	Reading is Remembering Words.	160
	Reading is a Precise Activity.	161
	Reading Involves Metalanguage	162
	Reading is Sounding Out Words	162
	Children's Concepts of Reading	163
	I Am A Reader	163
	Reading is Sounding Out Words	164
	Reading is Saying Words	166
	Reading Involves Using Metalinquistic Terms	166

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	I Read at Home and at School	167
	I Like Reading (Generally)	167
	Children's Concepts of Big Books	169
	Summary	170
VII	FURTHER UNDERSTANDING BIG BOOK EXPERIENCES	172
	Commonalities and Differences	172
	Commonalities	172
	Differences	174
	Home and School	175
	Similarities	175
	Differences	176
	Considerations	180
VIII	Overview of the Study	185
	Implications for Further Research	186
	Implications for Teachers and Other Educators	187
	Limitations of the Study	188
	Concluding Remarks	189
	REFERENCES	190
	APPENDICES	197
	APPENDIX A: Guiding Questions	197
	APPENDIX B: Letter to Parents	201
	APPENDIX C: Release Form	203
	APPENDIX D: Descriptions of Pictures Used During Interviews With Children	205

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
4.1	Overview of Big Book Experiences	61
4.2	Allocation of Talk Time	64
4.3	Relational Meanings of Interactions Within Big Books	66
4.4	Relational Meanings of Interactions Within Related Reading Activities	67
4.5	Selection of Children Within Big Books	68
4.6	Selection of Children - Related Activities	70
4.7	Overview of Big Book Experiences	76
4.8	Allocation of Talk Time	78
4.9	Relational Meanings of Interactions Within Big Books	79
4.10	Relational Meanings of Interactions Within Small Books	80
4.11	Relational Meanings of Interactions Within Related Activities	81
4.12	Selection of Children Within Big Books	82
4.13	Selection of Chilsren Within Small Books	82
4.14	Selection of Children - Related Activities	83
5.1	Reader Participation	86
5.2	Nature of Children's Reading	92
5.3	Interactive Behaviours - Questioning	97
5.4	Interactive Behaviours - Others	103
5.5	Attention to Input	110
6.1	Reader Participation	127
6.2	Nature of Children's Reading	136
6.3	Interactive Behaviours - Questioning	140
6.4	Interactive Behaviours - Others	144
6.5	Attention to Input	152

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

July 2, 1980. It's a warm, sunny day and I have just spent the second morning of a month long clinical practicum in a graduate reading program working with Larry, a bright, pleasant twelve year old. I think back to the two previous mornings' work and how Larry would gaze wistfully out the window at the sound of other children playing on the school grounds. I am to tutor Larry in reading each morning for the next four weeks. My initial assessment is beginning to confirm what the preliminary report from his school has said-that after six years in a formal reading program, Larry is in many ways essentially a non-reader.

The ability to read is highly valued in our society and the fact that Larry was about to spend the next four weeks of his vacation in a classroom engaged in an activity which obviously had been a source of great frustration in the past while his peers enjoyed the freedom of their summer vacation exemplified the value which society ascribes to the ability to make sense of print. Even though Larry had previously been tutored in reading and it had not been successful, his parents valued this skill so highly that they were not prepared to give up in their quest to have him attain it.

Over the last century, the responsibility for teaching children to read has increasingly been assigned to the school. Because of people like Larry, schools have come under much criticism for the failure to teach some children to read. Attacks have come from a number of sources over the years (e.g. Flesch,1955; Nikoforuk,1982; Martin,1985) for the supposed failure of the schools to teach children to read. The people just cited tend to view reading in a rather simplistic manner. It is the contention of this writer, however that reading is a complex process involving not only cognitive but also affective and social parameters.

THE PROBLEM

There is evidence that many children learn to read prior to coming

to school without the benefit of formal reading instruction. Researchers have found that one characteristic common to most of these children is that they have been read to by a caring adult or other sibling (Butler,1975; Clark,1976; Doake,1981; Durkin,1966; Holdaway,1979; and Moffett and Wagner,1982). The evidence provided by this research has led many researchers and theorists to question many of the assumptions underlying the teaching of reading in schools.

Moffett and Wagner (1982) posited that "for years, many educators have assumed that because most school children learn to read and write, schools were doing their jobs and that the mainstay of literacy - the basal reader approach - was working well enough" (p. 186). Inherent in the basal reader approach is the notion that learning to read is a formulaic process whereby reading is broken into its component parts which are learned hierarchically. Butler and Clay (1979), while arguing against the validity of this reasoning, pointed out that "sounding out the words which then become sentences seems the logical way to read. In fact, this may seem the only way to do it" (p.5).

This view of learning to read has been, and remains, firmly entrenched in the community at large and is also reflected in pedagogical practice. Hunter-Grundin (1979) outlined the degree to which this view of learning to read has permeated the educational milieu:

> Unfortunately, many teachers view beginning reading as instruction in phonic analysis and as a complex programme of grapheme-phonemes to be recognized and memorized. The training of these abstract skills is often preceded by or accompanied by some "look-say" word recognition drills. There is little doubt that the vast majority of children in the United Kingdom and the United States are confronted by 'formal' reading instruction. . . . (p. 22).

Slaughter et al. (1985) argued that this dominant ontological perspective leads teachers to view reading - indeed all facets of literacy - as a precise "higher status activity" that children must do "the right

way" from the beginning (p. 31).

Researchers and theoreticians have also lent credence to this view of learning to read. Chall (1967), as a result of her survey of teaching methodologies, concluded that a code emphasis is more efficacious than a meaning emphasis in beginning reading. Gough (1972) and Laberge and Samuels (1974) theorized a sub process view of reading. Pearson (1985), although seemingly unconvinced himself, concluded "for better or for worse, at least if one regards available instructional materials as a barometer of practice, the issue of early reading seems settled, with most commercial reading programs teaching phonics early and intensively" (p.724). Goodman and Goodman (1979), while disagreeing with this approach to initiating children into reading, maintained such a view of reading is rooted in the belief that learning to read, unlike learning to speak or listen, is a " deliberate, conscious academic achievement" (p. 139). They disagreed with Mattingly (1972) who proposed that reading is a secondary linguistic activity and the implication that learning to read is a more abstract process than learning to speak and learning to listen. Slaughter et al. (1985) similarly argued against this view:

> . . .part of the problem of literacy instruction, when language is taught out of context of its use may be due to a phenomenon that could be called the "dead weight" of literacy. In this view,written language is sacrosanct, a "thing onto itself" with conventions that must be adhered to not only in adult professional use but from the very beginning of school (p. 40).

This notion - that learning to read is fundamentally different from learning to speak and learning to listen - has recently been questioned by many researchers and theoreticians. Foremost amongst them have been Goodman (1970) and Smith (1982) who have developed psycholinquistic theories of reading encapsulating the notion that reading, like listening, is a primary receptive/constructive linguistic activity.

Indictments of traditional approaches to the teaching/ learning of reading have also come from Moffett and Wagner (1982):

> The acid test is to teach literacy to poor urban children and schools fail this test so often as to imply strongly that the traditional reading approach incarnated in basal readers did the job only for kids who were learning to read at home in addition. This reasoning seems borne out by the fact that as the middle class nightly story time has given way to television, many children of well educated parents have also begun to have the literacy problem formerly associated only with the poor (p. 186).

Several researchers have suggested that traditional approaches to teaching beginning reading place unreasonable cognitive demands on children. Doake (1981) for example argued that

> asking young children to concentrate their attention on the finer elements of language so that what they have to deal with no longer has meaning for them may be placing demands on them that many of them are unable to deal with cognitively (p. 89).

Schonell (1961) concluded that phonics instruction is beyond the intellectual capacity of many children below age seven (p. 87). Ehri (1979) also argued that "the decoding/blending process routinely taught to beginning readers in phonics programs may be difficult, if not impossible, to perform" (p.95).

The traditional skills orientation to teaching children to read is increasingly being rejected on the grounds that it is based on faulty learning theory. Goodman (1982) reasoned that behavioral psychology upon which the skills orientation is based is untenable in terms of human language development (p.234). Meek (1982) also argued against this orientation:

> Reading is whole task learning right from the start. From first to last the child should be invited to behave like a reader and those who want to help him should assume that he can learn and will learn, just as happened when he began to talk (p. 24).

Holdaway (1979) likewise concluded that learning to read is a phenomenon

whereby the whole is more than the sum of its parts (p. 19).

As an alternative to the "parts to whole" or skills orientation to teaching children to read, many researchers and theorists suggest that learning to read, as a developmental process, proceeds from whole to parts (Doake, 1981; Holdaway, 1979; Slaughter et al., 1985). That is, learning to read proceeds "from the general to the specific and from relatively uncoordinated efforts to well coordinated and finely controlled ones" (Doake, 1981, p. 403). If learning to read is accepted as developmental learning, the manner in which children are taught proceeds not from mastery of letter/sound to word to story but in the opposite direction.

FOCUS OF THE STUDY

One attempt to incorporate a developmental learning model into the classroom in which the focus is initially on the larger meaning context is the "shared book experience". This approach, developed by Holdaway and his colleagues in the 1960's, attempts to emulate the highly successful bedtime story situation through which many children have learned to read (Shuh, 1980, p. 1). Describing the bedtime story, Shuh commented that children

> . . . were exposed to books in a relaxed, enjoyable and non-competitive manner . . . . These children had a fair amount of control over what was read and were often encouraged to choose the books so that old favourites were read and reread, sometimes scores of times. They were also encouraged to participate by commenting, asking questions, and even "reading along". And the books that were read to them were interesting literature, and had exciting plots and language that were rich and complex and engaging (p. 2).

Holdaway (1981) acknowledged that storytime is already a part of most primary classrooms; however, he countered, the efficacy of the bedtime story is not reached in traditional classroom storytime for several reasons. First of all, sheer numbers prevent most children from seeing the text and therefore they cannot learn essential skills, such as

directionality and general top-bottom orientation of print. Teachers in good faith have also not responded to requests for rereading and personal selections have not been encouraged (p. 294).

In an attempt to overcome the limitations of the traditional storytime and to incorporate as many features of the bedtime story, "the shared book experience" was developed. Central to this concept was the "big book" - an enlarged text of high quality and well loved children's literature. The teacher, like the parent in the bedtime story situation, orally reads the text and the children are all able to see the print as it is read (Slaughter, 1983, p. 758). The teacher, through appropriate modeling, helps children incorporate their own personal experiences into the reading, helps them develop the concepts of "letter", and "word", the left-to-right orientation and strategies for predicting.

Holdaway (1981) proposed three criteria that the "shared-book-experience" would have to meet "in order to achieve comparable or stronger impact than is achieved in the ideal pre-school home setting" (p. 298). They are:

> First the books to be used in the reading program needed to be those that had proved themselves as loved by children. . . . Second, the books needed to have comparable visual impact from 20 feet as a normal book would have at the knee of a child. Third, the teacher needed to present new material with whole hearted enjoyment, rather more as a performer than would be the case with most parents (p. 298).

Of course, the shared-book-experience is not "the program". Holdaway advocated that normal size versions of big books, and taped oral readings of them also be made available. Likewise he advocated that drawing, painting, printing, writing, language experience stories also be utilized. However, the focus of the emergent reading program as outlined by Holdaway is undoubtedly "the shared-book-experience".

Initially, Holdaway developed the shared big book experience for

children who had not had exposure to experiences such as the bedtime story prior to coming to school. However, the shared big book experience is now being used as a technique to teach beginning reading to all children in many classrooms. The potential which big books hold for helping children learn to read has been explicated by Bondy (1984), Clay (1979), Park (1982), and Shuh (1980). However, while acknowledging this potential, Slaughter et al. (1985) and Park (1982) expressed caution about how big books will be used as they become more widespread. According to Park (1982):

> Big books form the very visible and exciting evidence of important changes in the whole structure and directions of early literacy programs. It must be said however that crudely grafted to old predjudices in the teaching of reading without references to the developmental and psycholinguistic imperatives which gave rise to their use, they may become another bandwagon doomed to early decay (p. 820).

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The overall purpose of the study is to describe and interpret the interactions that occur in shared big book experiences within the social context of two grade one classrooms.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Much of the research on emergent reading has concentrated on children's preschool, nursery school, and/or kindergarten reading experiences. Since grade one usually signifies children's initiation into a formal reading program, observation of reading experiences in this context should extend understanding of the emergent reading process at this level.

Although there has been considerable research on reading in the home on which big book experiences are based and which they are supposed to emulate, there is no evidence of what actually occurs in classrooms when this technique is implemented. Most of the research on reading in the home describes dyadic relationships, a quite different context from

the classroom where the adult-child ratio is quite frequently greater than 20 to 1. This study hopes to go beyond conjecture as to what might or should occur to describe what actually does occur.

There have been a number of investigations in classrooms where reading instruction was based on a traditional skills approach. Given that the teachers in this study used big books as a core component of the reading program, it is hoped that additional insights into this alternative approach to beginning reading instruction will emerge.

The results of the study should also provide valuable information to teachers and other educators concerned with using this particular approach to beginning reading instruction.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

Developments in Teaching Reading

Learning to read has not always been considered as important as it is in literate societies today. In ancient Rome, for example, wealthy men relegated the task to slaves who read aloud for them. By the eighteenth century, the ability to read was still limited to a few people with the majority of people expecting someone else to read aloud to them. This is evidenced by the fact that in Europe, there was a general hue and cry that those responsible for reading the Bible and reading prayers be better trained in oral reading (Windsor, 1981, p. 50).

Up to the mid-1800's, rote memorization of the alphabet and of whole selections was seen as the way to teach children to learn to read. Elocution remained the central focus of learning to read and reading exercises in general focused on the "right pronunciation" (Robinson, 1984, p.2). Reading materials generally consisted of religious and moralistic writings. At about this time however, the emphasis on rote memory and correct enunciation in learning to read changed as a result of the introduction of the Pestalozzian Primer which tried to emphasize thinking and meaning (Robinson, 1984, p.2). Learning to read started to evolve into a more formalized affair with the introduction of the first graded reading series, the McGuffey Readers, during the latter part of the nineteenth century (Robinson, 1984, p.3).

However, even at this time, the methodology employed in formal attempts to teach children to read was being questioned. Huey (1908) in his seminal work, suggested that learning to read is a similar process to learning to talk "without 'special methods and devices'" (p.330). He further

elaborated that "the secret of it all lies in the parents reading aloud to the child " (p.332).

Two developments in the early part of the twentieth century helped to ensure that such a developmental view of learning to read would not gain wide acceptance. First of all, prominent psychologists such as G. Stanley Hall and Arnold Gessel promoted a theory of child development which argued that, (a) such development is largely determined by heredity and that, (b) individual human development occurs in stages similar to those that human beings as a species have passed through (Durkin, 1983, pp. 43-44). This view of development projected the notion that difficulties in learning to read could be explained away in terms of children not being ready to read, thus camouflaging the effects of such factors as poor instruction, inadequate materials and overcrowded classrooms.

The second development was the publication of a report by Morphett and Washburne in 1931 which suggested that children should not be expected to begin learning to read until they had reached a mental age of six and one-half years. This study, based on limited and misconstrued data, led to the development of tests designed to measure "reading readiness" in terms of auditory discrimination, visual discrimination, and vocabulary levels. Although this concept of readiness was disproved by Gates and Bond as early as1936, tests to measure such readiness skills and workbooks designed to teach them proliferated (Durkin, 1983, pp.44-51).

Durkin has recently postulated a new concept of reading readiness. She cited Ausubel (1959) in defining readiness as "the adequacy of existing capacity in relation to the demands of the given task". Durkin expounded on this notion by proposing that "what learning to read requires depends on the method that is used to teach it and second on how the method is used" (p.55). Inherent in this definition, however, is the notion

that there are prerequisite skills which are necessary for a child to possess before he or she begins to read.

In the past several decades, much research has been done in terms of young children learning to read which tends to refute the notion that reading readiness and beginning reading are separate and distinct stages. Durkin (1966) studied children who had learned to read before coming to school. She found that such children exhibited curiosity about print and a persistence in learning more about it. They also had parents who were willing to help them and who read and re-read stories to them. Durkin identified the crucial variables:

> . . . What is more important the research data suggests,is the presence of parents who spend time with their children; who read to them; who answer their questions and their requests for help and who demonstrate in their own lives that reading is a rich source of relaxation, information, and contentment (p. 136).

Torrey (1973) reported the case of John, who although from a so-called disadvantaged background, learned to read through television commercials and the other environmental print. She contended that "reading for John seems to have been learned but not have been taught by anyone who was consciously aware of teaching him " (p.156). Torrey argued that traditional views of learning to read need re-examination in light of this case study. For as she said:

> Large vocabulary, accurate articulation of standard English and instruction in reading skills, may very well help a child learn to read. However even a single case like John's shows that they are not indispensible; that is, that neither success nor failure can be predicted in individual cases from these factors alone (p. 157).

The potentially powerful effects of story reading to children were documented by Butler (1976) in her description of the development of her granddaughter Cushla who had been born with several handicaps as a result of genetic defects. Cushla's parents and other relatives read to her from an

early age. Despite an incredibly gloomy prognosis of mental retardation from medical experts, Cushla's overall development progressed and she learned to read before the age that many other children do. Butler commented that "Cushla was not 'taught' to read unless the provision of language and story, in books and out of books, can be called a method" (p. 96).

Holdaway (1979) reasoned that learning to read, like learning to talk, is a developmental process; that it is learned by immersion in the process with invitation to participate. Initial gross approximations, he suggested, are to be expected and tolerated with gradual refinement of the process being rewarded until exactitude is accomplished. Such exactitude in reading, he argued, emanates not from initially learning isolated letters, sounds, and words, but from familiarity with how print works, developed from exposure to repeated reading of literature. He postulated that children need to develop a literacy set as a result of participation in this activity before they are expected to fine-tune the smaller parts of the process (pp.49-63). Holdaway and his associates drew upon the traditional bedtime story to provide similar experiences for children who had not developed such a literacy set upon entry to school. They developed what they called the shared-book-experience whereby children's favourite books were enlarged so that all of the children in the class could see the print. Thus with repeated readings and various activities designed to emulate the interactions characteristic of the bedtime story situation, Holdaway and his associates developed a reading program based on an experience by which children had traditionally learned to read at home.

In a follow-up study involving four preschool children, Doake (1981) confirmed that learning to read was a developmental process facilitated "as a result of their being read to regularly, but more particularly through

being re-read favourite stories repeatedly" (p. v). He found that children, while being read to, engaged in various forms of "reading like behaviour" through which "they gained control over the visual and non-visual aspects of print" (p. vi). Hayden (1985), using a larger sample of children, has statistically confirmed Doake's findings.

The notion that learning to read is an interactive process embedded in the daily lives of children in many families was proposed by Taylor (1983). Based on her study of young children successfully learning to read, she concluded :

> . . . it is entirely possible that many children fail because they never have the opportunity to experience the diffuse, moment-to-moment uses of print- the learning experiences of which the parents found it so difficult to speak. Print is presented to them as some abstract decontextualized phenomenon unrelated to everyday lives. They learn of reading as a private affair, something that happens in the pages of a world book (p. 92).

Baghban (1984) also described the reading development of her daughter Giti as being highly interactive. She commented that Giti, even at a very early age, regarded dialogue as being an essential part of reading. Baghban remarked that "it is a truism that anyone learns anything whether reading or tennis easier in frequent interaction with a model who is more proficient than the learner"(p.95).

In her longitudinal study of a nursery school classroom, Cochran-Smith (1984) found that story reading was an interactive affair with the teacher assuming the role of negotiator of text. She also observed story reading involving the same children in the neighborhood public library. Unlike the teacher in the nursery school, the public librarian did not permit interaction. Rather she demanded that the children not participate in the story reading nor interrupt to ask questions or make comments. Whereas Cochran-Smith (1984) described the teacher as a mediator and negotiator of text, she described the librarian as a reporter

of text; she saw the teacher, but not the librarian as helping the children become readers.

Brailsford (1985) traced the literacy development of six children during a significant portion of their kindergarten year. At the beginning of her study, she identified three children as High-Print-Aware and three children as Low-Print-Aware. Learning to read at home for the High-Print children was embedded in story time and other meaningful encounters with print; learning to read at home for the Low-Print children meant a dearth of story time and other meaningful activities and a focus on more "formal" activities such as learning isolated letter sounds. Just as in the homes of the Low-Print children, learning to read in the Kindergarten class meant learning isolated bits of knowledge about letters, sounds and conventions of print in a decontextualized manner. Brailsford saw literacy being enhanced by the homes of the High-Print children and by the school librarian who engaged the children in meaningful story-reading activities. However, she saw the classroom, and the homes of the Low-Print children as not enhancing the literacy development of the children.

After observing the literacy development of children both in the home and in the classroom, Juliebo (1985) concluded that in the homes in question, literacy experiences were meaningful and embedded in the daily lives of the children; on the other hand, she concluded that literacy experiences in the classroom consisted of the transmission of pieces of decontextualized information.

From these studies of emergent literacy, certain factors which seem to be contributors to the literacy development of children emerge. Reading to children - especially repeated reading of favourite stories - seems to be one such factor. Within such reading, the children are not passive recipients of information but actively participate in the reading,

aided by a caring adult. Secondly, learning to read seems to be embedded in the socio-cultural context and is not simply a matter of learning a set of isolated skills. Finally, learning to read seems to be, as Holdaway (1979) contended, a whole to parts process, contrary to "conventional wisdom" and common pedagogical practice. However, while we know a lot about literacy development in the preschool years, there is little research available on young children's initial literacy experience in the classroom and how they are similar to or different from literacy experiences of the home.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Mediation and Learning

Two positions regarding the crucial factors underlying literacy development may be delineated from the literature. One places the onus on the child's initiative in "abstracting out" and learning the essential aspects of the reading process (Teale, 1982, pp. 58-59). The second position places greater emphasis on the presence of a mediator who helps the learner interpret and control the literacy event.

Traditionally, educational theorists have postulated that the learner comes to know - to learn about - the world as a consequence of his/her interaction with his/her environment. For example, education in Rousseaunian terms was the "spontaneous development of the child as a result of his direct exposure and interaction with nature (Feuerstein and Hoffman, 1984, p. 47). A similar philosophy was later espoused by Dewey when he proposed that education should not be imposed upon the child from without but that the child should select that which he or she wanted to learn. In the past several decades, Piagetian psychology has become very influential in educational circles. It is based on the notion that the child constructs the world "by perceiving and doing". More contempory

supporters of this position include Forrester, 1977; Smith, 1976; and Torrey, 1973.

Recently, however, such so-called naturalistic models of cognitive development have come to be questioned. Feuerstein and Hoffman (1984), for example, suggested that the "freedom of the child to develop on his own is a myth" (p. 46). They reasoned that such "natural development" is not substantiated in fact and they rejected such a theoretical posture on a number of grounds. They argued that the constructivists' conception of cognitive development (interacting with the environment) can be rejected because there are individuals "who can be exposed to the same stimulus over and over again and still respond to each exposure as if it were a novel experience" (p. 53). They also suggested that the discrepency in the amount of learning that occurs in individuals exposed to the same stimuli militates against the structural constructivists' position, even when individual differences are considered. The third point which they made was that if cognitive development were simply a matter of a child interacting with his/her immediate environment, culture - the knowledge, values, and beliefs of a group from the past, as well as the present - could not be transmitted across generations. Thus they suggested that interaction with one's environment is not sufficient. They also argued that the transmission of culture is the essence of our humanness and without the "renewal of culture within the individual, there could be no human mentality, no personality" (p. 57). Vygotsky's (1978) work emphasizes the importance of the social context and the interactions of the people within this context in influencing a child's development as an independent learner.

Feuerstein et al.(1980) proposed an alternative to the traditional models of cognitive development:

> We conceive of development of cognitive structure in the organism as a product of interaction between the organism and its

> environment: direct exposure to sources of stimuli and mediated learning [his emphasis] (p. 15).

In essence, Feuerstein et al. provided an alternative to the Stimulus-Organism-Response paradigm of traditional theorists such as Piaget. While Feuerstein still allows for learning to take place via direct interaction with the environment, he believes the essence of learning occurs through mediation with another human. At the center of such a conceptualization is the notion that another human helps the child develop cognitive structure by "filtering and framing the stimulus, regulating the child's behaviour" (Feuerstein and Hoffman, 1984, p. 55). Feuerstein labelled this intervention Mediated Learning Experience and described it thus:

> By mediated learning experience (M.L.E.), we refer to the way in which stimuli emitted by the environment are transformed by a mediating agent, usually, a parent, sibling, or other caregiver. This mediating agent, guided by intentions, culture, and emotional investments, selects and organizes the world of stimuli for the child. The mediator selects stimuli that are most appropriate and then frames, filters and schedules them; he determines the appearance or disappearance of certain stimuli and ignores others. Through this process of mediation, the cognitive structure of the child is affected. The child acquires behaviour patterns and learning sets, which in turn become important ingredients of his capacity to become modified through direct exposure to stimuli. Since direct exposure to stimuli quantitatively constitutes the greatest source of the organism's experience, the experience of sets of strategies and repertoires that permit the organism to efficiently use this exposure has considerable bearing upon cognitive development (p. 15).

Feuerstein and Hoffman identified the characteristics of interaction which constitute examples of a M.L.E.. One characteristic of a M.L.E. is the "intentionality of the mediator which is shared with the child" (p. 56). Feuerstein explained intentionality as follows:

> In addition to the selection of the stimuli and schelduling in terms of space, time, and order, mediated learning occurs as a result of the direct and intentional provision of stimuli which are considered necessary for the growth and general orientation of the child. Such stimuli are culturally determined and the child's attention is constantly and repeatedly directed toward them (p. 33).

This intentionality on the part of the mediator is shared with the child and it results in the child searching for new elements in the environment and also develops within the child a need to "share and communicate to others new perceptions and experiences" (p. 33). Feuerstein admitted that intentionality does not require a clear awareness on the part of the partners in an interaction that they are engaged in a learning event; in fact he admitted that such interaction can be just as effective if it occurs as the result of the implicit expectation of the culture (p. 22).

A second characteristic of a M.L.E. is transcendence. Feuerstein and Hoffman posited that it is the "transcending characteristic of M.L.E. that is responsible for establishing in the child the anticipation of events and search for horizons that go beyond the immediate" (p. 56). It seems that an assumption underlying the notion of transcendence is that reality is not episodic; that is, we do not come to know the world by experiencing it a bit at a time. Furthermore, the development of cognitive processes is not dependent upon specific tasks; indeed, as Feuerstein suggested, it is only when cognitive processes become detached from specific tasks that cognitive structures become established (p. 56). The notion here is that these cognitive processes are "generic":

> Whether a child is taught to build a canoe or to complete a puzzle, the underlying cognitive structure will not necessarily differ in a fundamental way (Feuerstein, p. 82).

The assignment of meaning by the mediator to both the stimulus and the interaction is the third characteristic of a M.L.E.. Feuerstein and Hoffman maintained that in a M.L.E. type interaction, in addition to having cognitive meaning, "the object or event presented to the child, is not neutral but embodies affective, emotional, and value oriented meanings" (p. 56). That is, the mediation is not done in a detached manner; rather the mediator is committed to making the mediation efficacious.

The fourth characteristic of M.L.E. is mediation for competence. That is, as Feuerstein and Hoffman suggested, "the mediator, both explicitly and implicitly, makes the child feel that he is able" (p. 56).

Regulation of behaviour is the fifth characteristic of M.L.E.. The child does not gather, elaborate, and express information randomly. Rather, the mediator schedules the learning event, paces the interaction, and reduces the impulsivity of the child (Feuerstein and Hoffman, 1984, p. 56).

These characteristics of course do not operate in isolation. Rather, they are connected and intertwined, supporting, extending and enriching each other.

Mediated Learning and Emergent Literacy

Feuerstein's model of cognitive development was developed within the context of explaining the potentiality of people who had been deemed "retarded" by traditional psychometric measures. He did not apply his model to the study of emergent reading/literacy. However, in recent years, researchers such as Brailsford (1985) and Juliebo (1985) have attempted to do this. Goodman and Goodman (1979), although not referring to Feuerstein, also acknowledged the role of the mediator in helping children learn to read.

> When we use the term natural learning, we do not regard the process as an unfolding in an environment free of obtrusive intrusions. Teaching children to read is not putting them into a garden of print and leaving them unmolested (p. 139).

The research of these and others in the area of emergent literacy may be summarized within the mediated learning framework provided by Feuerstein.

Intentionality: Although not referred to as such, intentionality has been identified as a component of learning in emergent literacy. Holdaway (1979) claimed that emergent literacy as an example of "developmental

learning" is very much a directed process with a caring adult intervening in various ways to enhance such development. Countering those who try to define learning to read - and likewise learning to talk and learning to walk - as developing "naturally" without adult intervention, he proposed that such "so called 'natural' learning is in fact supported by higher quality teacher intervention than is normally the case in the school setting" (p. 22). Intentionality is also evident in preschool learning situations, in that parents provide emulative models, establish contingencies for intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and provide assistance on demand. They do this, as Holdaway intimated, because they intend for their children to master a specific skill.

As was mentioned previously, Feuerstein suggested that, although a mediated learning experience necessarily requires intentionality, a clear awareness on the part of the partners that they are involved in a learning event is not necessary. Clark (1976) echoed this statement when she concluded after studying the characteristics of young fluent readers that:

> Most of the children discussed here seem to develop their early skills in oral language, in reading and writing, in a warm, accepting and non-pressured environment where the parents were guided by their child's interests and indeed some parents even felt embarrassed at their children's rapid and excessive early progress toward literacy (p. 48).

Heath (1982) similarly concluded that few parents are fully aware of the contribution they make to their children's literacy development through the bedtime story - a literacy event which she, and researchers such as Holdaway (1979) and Doake (1981) see as pivotal in the child's literacy development (p. 51). Thus intentionality is present, although often at a subconscious level.

Feuerstein's view that intentionality in a mediated learning experience is present in both partners in the learning event is also

evidenced in literacy learning events in emergent literacy. Referring to the bedtime story situation, Doake (1981) suggested that "being read to was obviously an enjoyable, secure, and satisfying situation for the parents and the children" (p. 37). Holdaway (1979) similarly commented upon this reciprocity in the shared reading situation, suggesting that parents engage in reading books to their children not to give their children an advantage educationally but because of the extreme sense of pleasure and satisfaction in the experience itself; similarly the child feels "security and special worth arising from the quality of attention being received" (p. 40).

That intentionality is a characteristic of interactions which contributes to literacy development is also supported by the fact that not all parents engage in such interactions. In other words, activities such as shared reading are not just engaged in automatically by all parents. Therefore, it follows that parents who engage in such interactions, do so on the basis of an intentionality - an intentionality which Doake intimated is culturally transmitted. He concluded that parents who themselves had been read to as children brought a different set of attitudes to the shared book experience in comparison to those parents who had not been read to. He found that parents who had been read to as children "started reading to their children much earlier in their lives, they read more frequently and for longer periods of time, and they indicated clearly that they thoroughly enjoyed sharing books with their children" (p. 267).

Transcendence: Donaldson (1978) proposed that "the better you are at tackling problems without having to be sustained by human sense, the more likely you are to succeed in our education system" (p. 77). This "movement beyond the bounds of human sense" she labelled "disembedded thinking" - a term which appears to be congruent with Feuerstein's notion

of "transcendence". She further posited that the ability to engage in disembedded thinking "yields its [life's] greatest riches" (p. 77). Both authors suggested that the ability to move beyond the here and now is a generic characteristic of learning; by implication, then, it is also characteristic of emergent literacy.

The notion that "transcendence" is a characteristic of emergent literacy is also pervasive in the literature. Snow (1983) posited that "children's previous experience with some event, place, word, or text can support their current interpretation or reaction" (p. 176). She called this "historical context" and was referring to the ability of the emergent reader to use what is known to access the unknown. Dyson and Genishi (1983), in providing a description of an interaction between 41/2-year-old Eloisa and her father in a shared book situation described an example of the use of "historical context":

> Eloisa is not only commenting upon the people she sees in the book, but she is also thinking about them, relating the book experience to possible experiences in her own life (p. 752).

Doake (1981) also found that the parents in his study, in answering a question inside a literacy event, nearly always used some previous family experience to which the child who was asking the question could relate (p. 230).

Juliebo (1985) provided an example of transcendence in her study of young children. On one occasion when a father and young daughter were reading, she questioned the meaning of "shingle". Rather than a curt answer, the father responded, "A shingle is a little flat piece of either wood or a . . . sticky tarpaper which you put on the roof to keep the rain from getting in" (p. 270).

Snow (1983) proposed that "semantic contingency" which adults use to help facilitate oral language development in children is also used to

facilitate literacy development. She identified "answering questions about pictures in books, carrying on coherent conversations with children about the pictures and the text in books, and giving help with writing when requested " as examples of semantic contingencies" (p. 167).

Transcending the here and now, as Snow suggested, is characteristic of literacy events in middle class families (p. 185). However, Heath (1982) found that this is not true of other social/cultural contexts. Describing book reading in the bedtime story situation in Roadville, a working class white town in the Appalachian district of the United States, she commented:

> Roadville adults do not extend either the context or habits of literacy events beyond book reading. They do not, upon seeing an item or event in the real world, remind children of a similar event in a book and launch a running commentary on similarities and differences (p. 61).

Heath contended that this failure on the part of adults to mediate transcendence restricts the literacy development of these children as they move through the grades in school. She described how these children are restricted:

> If asked to write a creative story or tell it into a typewriter, they retell stories from books; they do not create their own. They rarely provide emotional or personal commentary in their accounting of real events or book stories. They are rarely able to take knowledge learned in one context and shift it to another; they do not compare two items or events and point out similarities and differences. They find it difficult either to hold one feature or event constant and shift all others or to hold all features constant but one (p. 63).

The literacy events in Roadville contrast quite sharply with events Heath observed in homes in Maintown, a white, middle-class town in the same geographic area:

> This patterning of linking old and new knowledge is reinforced in narrative tales which fictionalize the teller's events or recapitulate a story from a book. Thus, for these children, the bedtime story is simply an early link in a long chain of interrelated patterns of taking meaning from the environment (p. 71).

In her longitudinal study, Heath found that children in Maintown move into literacy (and through school) with relative ease; children from Roadville, as was shown earlier, run into difficulties as they attempt to move into literacy. Both groups of children were exposed to bedtime stories. A salient feature in the bedtime story situation in Maintown homes was transcendence of the here and now; this same feature was lacking in the Roadville homes.

There is considerable evidence, then, that transcendence is characteristic of interactions which promote emergent literacy. Holdaway (1979), in delineating what he refers to as a "literacy set" perhaps best summarizes the results of children having had transcendence mediated to them:

> They are able to attend to language without reference to the immediate situation around them, and respond to it in complex ways creating images from their past experiences - they have learned to operate vicariously. This has opened a new dimension of fantasy and imagination, allowing them to create images of things never experienced or entities which do not exist in the real world. By these means they are able to escape from the bonds of the present into the past and future (p. 49).

Assignment of Meaning: According to Feuerstein and Hoffman, the mediator in a M.L.E. assigns meaning to the learning event along both cognitive and affective dimensions. One example of the assignment of cognitive meaning is found in child initiated requests for repeated reading of favourite books. The fact that the child is able to engage in "reading like behaviour" as suggested by Doake suggests that the child finds the activity meaningful. That children are able to "read" stories at a semantic level with the surface level of their "reading" departing significantly from the text (e.g. Doake, 1981; Holdaway, 1979) also is indicative of cognitive meaning being assigned to a literacy event. That is, the child is not merely recalling from rote memory at a surface level; he or she is reconstructing

through various cues the meaning that he or she ascribed to the story.

The assignment of affective meaning to learning events in emergent literacy is described by several researchers in this area. Doake (1981), for example, discussed the centrality of such meaning in the shared reading situation:

> There was little doubt as a result of observing the parents reading to their children on many, many occasions, that their positive approach to the task and their obvious enjoyment of it created an intensely secure and loving family situation that was repeated over and over again. Since books became for the children the vehicle through which they could experience this warm human sharing, it seems entirely possible that apart from their story, language, and pictorial qualities, books came to be seen by the children as sources of pleasure, enjoyment, and security in themselves (p. 222).

Holdaway (1979) also argued for the necessity of interactions to be emotionally meaningful in literacy events in emergent literacy. He maintained that for such an event to be meaningful cognitively, it has to be emotionally meaningful since "there is no such thing as human insight without human emotion" (p. 98). He, like Doake, argued that in an effective shared reading situation, such meaning is assigned to the event and that the interaction becomes emotionally meaningful in and of itself (p. 149). This contrasts with what he speculated often happens in schools:

> It is our way in educational matters to value the cognitive and devalue the emotional. The emotional accompaniments - or should we say the emotional heart- of any human activity refuses to be ignored. No matter how meticulous we are about getting things intellectually right, human activity is tragically deformed. This is an indictment of the apparently safe and right intellectual analysis that leaves out of consideration so many of the available facts (p. 97).

This emotional meaning, however, does not naturally emanate from the interaction; as Feuerstein and Hoffman (1984) suggested, this meaning must be mediated. This point is substantiated by Heath (1982b) in her description of literacy events in Roadville:

> Roadville parents provide their children with books; they read to

> them and ask questions about the book contents. They choose books which emphasize rhymes, alphabet learning, and simplified Bible stories, and they require children to repeat books and to answer formulaic questions about their contents (p. 63).

Roadville parents seem to engage in various literacy events more as a sense of duty than as a result of such events having deep emotional meaning. Perhaps not surprisingly, this emotional detachment from literacy events continues with Roadville children upon entry to school. As was mentioned previously, Heath reported that these children very frequently found the road to literacy very difficult. Given this lack of affective meaning in literacy events early in their lives, this appears to confirm what researchers such as Doake, Feuerstein and Hoffman and Holdaway have said.

Mediating for Competence: The notion espoused by Feuerstein and Hoffman that a learner must be led to believe in his ability to learn a given task is also found in the literature on emergent literacy. Meek (1982), for example, in attempting to convey this message, stated: "I must say again that the most important thing is the learner's belief that he can turn print into sense" (p. 51).

Evidence of such mediating for competence is also found in Doake's study. For example, he found that parents did not ask questions of their children which they knew their children couldn't answer; furthermore, he contended, "they never on any occasion allowed their questions to interfere with the engagement of the story" (p. 230). Again, reiterating on how the parents' questions assured success, he commented "They were almost always of the kind children could answer easily" (p. 532).

Doake also found that parents used the "oral cloze technique" to demonstrate to their children that they could successfully engage in the reading process. He reasoned that when parents used this technique in

situations where the child's memory for predictable text could be accessed, they were establishing a "situation where success was almost always assured" (p. 236).

Another strategy which Doake found that parents used to communicate anticipation of success to their children was to encourage their children to engage in reading like behaviour. He contended:

> They displayed a remarkable ability to invite their children to participate in the reading at a point where the children were almost always assured of success and they conveyed a sense of pleasure in their attempt (p. 423).

Such attempts to mediate competency, however, were not always evident. He found that the mother of Karen and Sean, two of the children in his study, occasionally demanded that they accurately reproduce the text and when such was not the case, she corrected their approximations. This, he found, tended to cause these children to abandon reading like behaviour - a stage which he considers essential on the road to becoming a reader (p. 531).

Holdaway (1979) also argued that a belief in the child's ability to become a reader must be communicated to the child. However, he contended that this is oftentimes not the case in school, for as he pointed out, "sadly when we are concerned with literacy learning we are concerned with failure, ineptitude, defeat, inferiority, despair" (p. 97).

Brailsford (1985) found that the children in her study who had high literacy knowledge viewed themselves as "readers-in-progress" (a view also held by their parents). This was in contrast to the Low-Print-Aware children who viewed themselves as non-readers; similarly, their parents viewed them as non-readers.

Heath (1982b) also concluded that a concern with the child's feeling of competence is not always evident in literacy events in school. In an

ethnographic study involving students from Trackton, a black, working class community, she concluded that one of the reasons these students encounter difficulties in literacy events in school is that they are incapable of answering the questions asked of them (p. 105). Unlike the parents described by Doake, teachers of Trackton students do not mediate competence; in fact, through the type of questions they ask, they tend to show these students that they are incompetent in terms of what is expected of them. Feuerstein and Hoffman's (1984) notion of mediating competence bears some similarity to Vygotsky's (1978) notion of zone of proximal distance, for in mediating competence, caregivers are in fact working or cooperating with children in helping them accomplish tasks that are within their ability.

Regulation of Behaviour: According to Holdaway (1979), "free choice and non-interference have become formalized to the point where teachers dare not even demonstrate desirable behaviour. . . " (p. 133). Donaldson (1978) also objected to those who propose that learning is "natural" and that adults should not interfere in learning. She maintained quite adamantly that "the young child is not capable of deciding for himself what he should learn" (p. 119). Snow (1983) argued that in a learning event involving a parent-child dyad, the child's behaviour is indeed regulated. She termed such regulation "scaffolding" and defined it as "the steps taken to reduce the degree of freedom in carrying out some task, so that the child can concentrate on the difficult skill he is in the process of learning" (p. 170).

Examples of such regulation of behaviour in literacy learning events in emergent literacy are quite evident. Holdaway, for example, suggested that although parents generally have a great deal of tolerance for approximation, they invoke contingencies whereby approximations moving toward the desired response are reinforced while those moving away from

the desired response are not.

Doake found that generally, the parents made deliberate attempts to have their children participate in story reading by providing cues at appropriate times to get them to join in. One such strategy that parents used was to intentionally slow down when they wanted the children to read cooperatively (p. 231). Parents also reported that they sometimes intentionally miscued to see if they would be corrected (p. 232). Another strategy widely used by parents to encourage participation was what Doake referred to as "completion reading" whereby "the reader paused at a point in the story and appropriate words were able to be given by the children to complete the phrase or sentence" (p. 428).These strategies appear to be attempts at regulation of behaviour in that parents presumably engage in them to ensure that the children are attending to the task at hand. Simultaneously, and most likely unwittingly, parents were encouraging their children to engage in such productive reading strategies as monitoring and predicting.

Several of the parents in Doake's study also attempted to get their children to attend to print during story reading. This they did by pointing to words of special interest or running their fingers underneath the lines of print (p. 229). Although the ability to track print is developmental in that there appear to be stages of increasing exactitude, such behaviour must be organized (Clay, 1979, p. 99). For several of the children in Doake's study this was being done; however, Clay suggested that children who cannot read upon entering school have not had this behaviour regulated (p.99).

Snow (1983) also suggested that routines are characteristic of literacy learning events and identified the book reading situation as an example of a routine. She identified "book-handling skills", "the discovery

of print", "the recognition of story schema" amongst other skills that result from the book reading routine. The emergence of "reading like behaviour" as identified by Doake and Holdaway and the development of a "literacy set" as suggested by Holdaway would also seem attributable to routinization of interaction.

Although the various interactions have been dealt with separately, this is not to suggest they occur in isolation in learning events; in fact, Feuerstein and Hoffman (1984) contended that these interactions operate in conjunction.

READING AS A SOCIAL PROCESS

Interactions of the type described above, do not of course happen in a vacuum; rather they are embedded in a much broader social context. Strickland, in the introduction to Taylor's Family Literacy (1983), made this point when she stated, "just as language cannot be separated from thinking, neither can it be separated from the context in which it is learned."

Several researchers have provided definitions of social context in terms of language learning. Cochran-Smith (1983), for example, defined it as follows:

> . . . it includes not only the immediate physical and verbal environments within which an event or act of some kind takes place, but also in at least equal measure, the significance of that event for those who participate in it. Thus understanding the values, attitudes, norms, beliefs, and assumptions shared by participants concerning the meaning or importance of an event is crucial for understanding of the event (p. 220).

Erickson and Shultz (1977), while proposing a similar definition, elaborated that context consists of "mutually shared and ratified definitions of situations and in the social actions persons take on the basis of those definitions" (p. 6). Slaughter et al. (1985), provided a congruent definition but also suggested "the topic, subject matter, or

content being studied, and the kinds of print and textual material used is part of context" (p.16).

Reading has traditionally been viewed as a strictly cognitive process; however, researchers have recently begun to view reading as a social process as well (Bloome, 1981; Cazden, 1981). This is congruent with the notion presented above that the meaning of an interaction is highly determined by the context in which the interaction occurs. That is, reading is assigned different meanings and functions as determined by the context in which it occurs.

Research concerning reading as a social process has had two major foci, namely in more formal situations such as classrooms and day care and in more informal situations such as in homes. The literature, as it pertains to each of these situations will be examined separately.

Reading and Learning to Read at Home: The Social Context

The degree to which learning to read is embedded in social context is quite evident in the literature pertaining to children who learn to read at home. Baghban (1984) highlighted this in describing her daughter Giti, a preschooler whose daily routine "centered on three major reading sessions: after waking; before an afternoon nap; before going to sleep at night" (p. 30).

Taylor (1983) posited that for children learning to read at home, the process is "intrinsically woven into the social process of family life" (p. 71). She found that the children in her study learned about print through their engagement in literate activities which were socially significant to them. She explained:

> Writing letters to family and friends, reading signs, demonstrating ownership and filling out forms were all functional literate activities for children participating in the study. From a very young age print formed one medium for mediating experience (p. 86).

Taylor also found that parents, in addition to incidentally encouraging their children to participate in literate activities such as those mentioned above, also consciously introduced their children to print. This was done, she concluded, not to teach reading, but rather because the print in recipes and on signs "were part of the child's world, and the child learned of their purpose, as well as their meaning" (p. 20). Harste, Burke and Woodward (1981) similarly concluded that learning to read at home is inextricably embedded in the socio-cultural context.

Perhaps one of the most obvious facets of learning to read at home is the "bedtime story" or "shared reading" event. Moffett and Wagner (1983) contended that "the way most children have been learning at home is what in this book we have called the lap method; that is they sit on someone's lap and hear a story read to them while following the text with their eyes" (p. 186).

Several people have commented upon the social context of this event. Doake (1981) described the context thus:

> There was little doubt, as a result of observing the parents reading to their children on many, many occasions, that their positive approach to the task and their obvious enjoyment of it created an intensely secure and loving family situation that was repeated over and over again (p. 222).

Baghban echoed this in proposing that "the success of our reading to her [Giti] surely derived from the extra opportunity the experience provided for body contact along with conversation" (p. 94). Holdaway similarly commented upon the richness and security inherent in the bedtime story situation. Both Holdaway and Doake postulated that as a result of this secure and enjoyable activity, children come to see reading (and books) as being pleasurable. Baghban concurred with this, suggesting " the pleasure she [Giti] found in the coziness of our reading to her transferred to the comfort she herself finds in the act of reading" (p. 95).

Shared reading in the home is very much an interactive affair. Baghban, for example, reported that "Giti's early reading was also interactive. She sat on my lap and we both assumed roles and took turns" (p. 27). Taylor (1983) found that a considerable portion of the time in story reading was taken up by parents "relating events in the stories to the everyday lives of their children" (p. 70). Doake (1981) found that the parents in his study engaged in what he called "co-operative reading" with their children. He elaborated:

> Cooperative reading, as the label implies, involved a sharing of the reading of the story by both the participants. Sometimes the reading was in unison, with one of the readers saying the words fractionally behind the other one. Sometimes one reader took the lead and read independently and sometimes the other did that (p. 447).

In the shared reading situation then, learning to read is an interactive, give and take affair that is strongly influenced by the social context of which it is a part; it is not a uni-directional process.

Learning to read at home is usually non-competitive. Holdaway (1979), in building a case for the schools trying to emulate effective learning environments found in the home, suggested:

> If we are to avail ourselves of such vital learning energy, the most important insight we must carry over into the school from these models is that cultural learnings are non-competitive - they are entered into to be like other people - to be significantly human - and they have nothing at all to do with excluding for the purposes of personal power (p. 64).

Meek (1982) alluded to this non-competitive aspect of learning to read at home when she said that parents know "how to tolerate a child's gradual approach to what adults naturally do" (p. 27). That is, the child's competencies are accepted for what they are and there is no desire to compete with some external standard.

Reading, and learning to read, then are affected by the contexts in which they occur. Substantive differences seem to be evidenced between

learning to read at home and learning to read in school.

Reading and Learning to Read in School: The Social Context

The classroom context, unlike that of the home, is made up of many more individuals and consquently many more relationships. Research has shown that teachers relate differently to low and high achievers. Allington (1978), in a study of twenty primary classrooms, found that there were "dramatic differences" between the teachers' treatment of high achieving and low achieving children. He found that teachers, (1) corrected poor readers more than good readers; (2) corrected poor readers as soon as the errors were made but allowed good readers to complete the unit (i.e. phrase or sentence), and (3) tended to provide grapho-phonic cues for poor readers but tended to provide syntactic/semantic cues for good readers.

Gumperz (1972) also found that teacher interactions with slow readers were markedly different from interactions with better readers. Like Allington, Gumperz found that with the slow readers, demands for precision and exactitude were evident; on the other hand, with the advanced group approximation was tolerated and the atmosphere was much more relaxed.

In the situations described above, reading for the poorer readers had a radically different meaning than it had for the more advanced readers. When teachers interacted with the low achieving children, they portrayed reading as a precise, analytical process wherein the reader pays attention to the minutiae of print in a strict, no nonsense manner. On the other hand, when the same teachers interacted with higher achieving children, they portrayed reading as a more holistic process wherein approximation was tolerated and which took place in a relaxed atmosphere.

Bloome (1981) investigated reading as it occurred within the context of a junior high school social studies classroom. He concluded that

within this classroom, reading was portrayed as a process of following procedures. That is, students were given the message that to find an answer to a question one simply had to find the appropriate line of text (p. 14). Implicit in such a connotation are the notions that meaning exists exclusively in the text and that reading is a rather passive process in which the participants' only task is to decode print and that the teacher is the controller of how reading shall be executed.

Bloome (1981) also found that students tended to equate reading with patterns of social behaviour and used these to their advantage.

> It should also be noted that several students in the class are "masking" reading. They are "faking" it. They follow the required "visible" behaviour of looking at the book and flipping pages, having the appropriate postural behaviour and so forth but they are often on the wrong page and have only a minimal idea about what the instructional task is or what the appropriate answer might be (p. 14).

Reading in this classroom was not a construction of meaning through the interaction of readers and texts; rather it was a set of procedures and a set of behaviours that students followed in many cases to avoid reading.

Within schools, learning to read is a highly competitive affair. McDermott (1978) suggested this competition is exaggerated by traditional ability grouping practices but he found that even within the "bottom group", one child can often be heard accusing another of not being able to read. Holdaway (1979) also commented on the competitive nature of schooling:

> School tends to be an agency through which children find out very rapidly how they rank. This may be a useful service at the end of an educational process but it has no place in the infant room. Literacy should be regarded like oracy as a necessary human skill, and any influence which seriously violates the rights of individual people to become literate should be removed (p. 169).

Cochran-Smith (1984) provided a very different description of reading as it occurred in a nursery school setting. She suggested that in

this context, story-readings were "located within adult-child social interactions in which both adult readers and child listeners played very active verbal roles". She also observed that "the story texts were never simply read to the children, nor did the children respond as passive listeners or participants via ritualized responses" (p. 225). Rather, she concluded that meanings were negotiated between adult reader and child listener. She outlined how this was achieved:

> . . . the nursery school story reader was essentially mediating between books and children. She instructed her listeners in how to make sense of texts by signalling them to use or using for them various kinds of world knowledge as they interpreted parts of storybook texts. Within story reading interactions, the storyreader also guided the children in ways to use book knowledge in their lives. In this way the storyreader provided a context for the reading of decontextualized print. That is, she essentially transformed the usually internalized, automatic, and one-sided reading process of many literate adults into an outwardly explicit, gradual and joint sense building process. In this particular community, therefore, nursery school group storyreading served as a key to the transition from oral to written language (p. 226).

McDermott (1977) believed that for learning to occur in school, it is necessary to establish "trusting relations". He defined "trusting relations" as "a crucial subset of the working agreements people use to make sense of each other" (p. 199). He elaborated that successful teaching depends on knowing "where a person is coming from or where a person's head is at" (p. 201). "Failure to recognize the necessity of establishing trusting relations", he continued, could have several possible results. One is that children simply don't listen and the teacher spends most of the time controlling "behaviour problems" (p. 206). A second possibility is that the teacher maintains control authoriatively but teaches a "phantom lesson" to what in effect is a non-existent audience; that is, although the children are physically present, they do not participate in, nor do they learn from, the lesson (p. 206). McDermott of course was not referring specifically to learning to read; however he concluded that "the successful acquisition of

literacy . . . depends on the achievement of trusting relations" (p. 208).

The recognition of the importance of social context in reading and learning to read has led to attempts to define the type of classroom context where literacy development is enhanced. Slaughter et al. (1985), described such a context:

> In classroom environments that are conducive to literacy learning, one frequently observes students initiating literacy activities for their own exploration and enjoyment. This occurs in supportive settings where children are encouraged to experiment with different kinds of literacy events, risk taking is encouraged in the learning process, there is a print rich environment and peer support is allowed and facilitated. . . . Children need to be able to practice literacy in social settings supportive of functional and purposeful uses of literacy (p. 28).

FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

The teaching of reading may be viewed as a mediated activity within a social context. The nature of shared big book experiences will be described within this framework. While Feuerstein's model provided a basis for understanding the factors within a mediated learning experience, research on emergent literacy (Brailsford,1985; Hayden,1985) has shown that finer distinctions must be made within the framework in order to capture the details of what occurs between mediators and learners as the latter are initiated into the world of reading. Thus research by Brailsford (1985), Doake (1981), Hayden (1985) and others will be considered as a set of parameters for describing the network of interactions that occurs.

Likewise while the social aspects of literacy which have been described from within the home settings will guide the interpretations of observations within the school context, the researcher is aware that home and school contexts are not the same. In fact as Spencer (1986) indicated, the contexts of home and school may be so different that reading in both contexts may be viewed as distinct tasks. Thus in interpreting the social context of the school, the observed data as well as conclusions of other

researchers will be weighed in attempting to conceptualize how children in grade one experience big books.

CONCLUSION

Learning to read has frequently been viewed as essentially a matter of learning a set of isolated skills. The evidence of how children learn to read prior to coming to school does not support this view. However the social contexts of home and school are not equivalent and the findings from the former cannot be automatically transfered to the latter. Research is needed to describe the school context in which big books are shared by teachers with children.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The overall guiding question in this study was "What is the nature of the interactions, both cognitive and social, through which big books are shared?". The traditional type of research design (experimental and quasi-experimental) was not amenable to providing answers to this question. Instead it was deemed necessary to become an observer (and to a lesser extent, a participant) in the social context within which the sharing of big books occurred. Thus, this research is in keeping with the sentiments of researchers in the field of reading in recent years.

Over the past two decades, there have been repeated calls from researchers and theorists within the reading field for the use of alternatives to the traditional statistical research methodologies in investigations into learning/teaching of reading. More than a decade ago. Farr and Weintraub, in an editorial in the Reading Research Quarterly lamented what they termed the "methodological incarceration" of reading research. They elaborated :

> We are sorely in need of research designs and new approaches that allow variables to emerge from the situation being studied that admit to a lack of answers and even to a lack of questions, that allow for study in a natural setting, and that provide for the researchers' biases as well as alternate interpretations. Such inquiry approaches are available in other disciplines. Reading researchers need to identify and explore these alternate methodologies. The development and adaptation of such methodologies can best be fostered if researchers will spend more time worrying about the issues and the problems in the reading field and then locating and developing methodologies as well as totally new approaches that will help them study those issues. The methodologies should be a natural extension of the mental inquiry the researcher has engaged in; they should allow researchers to study phenomena in the natural setting; and most important, they should allow issues to emerge as they are studied (Farr and Weintraub, 1974, no page available).

One of the chief criticisms of traditional research designs has been the lack of "ecological validity" associated with such designs (Heweitt, 1982; Kamil, 1984; Venezky, 1984). As Venezky pointed out, the problem of ecological validity was raised by Cattel, a pioneer researcher in the field of reading, a century ago, who suggested that " the conditions of the experiment places the subjects in an abnormal condition" (Cattel,1886, p.63). Heweitt (1982) argued that the development of theoretical positions in reading must take into account the socio-cultural contexts in which reading occurs.

Closely associated with the issue of ecological validity is the concern with relevancy of research to reading instruction. Tovey and Kerber (1986) expressed such a concern.

> Merely reporting significant/nonsignificant differences does not provide teachers the specific information they need to improve instruction. Reading teachers seemingly need more descriptive input . . . (p.133).

Langer (1985) called for more in situ research " if we hope to make an impact on the quality of teaching and learning " (p. 117). Mehan (1979) similarly assessed the need for qualitative research, suggesting "we need research strategies that examine the living process of education that occurs within classrooms"(p. 10). That there is a need for qualitative research to complement traditional research designs in answering the myriad of questions relating to reading seems axiomatic.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) defined qualitative research as having "the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher as the key instrument" (p.27). They conceded that various electronic and/or mechanical equipment may be used in data collection but insisted that "even when such equipment is used . . . the data is collected on the

premises and supplemented by the understanding that is gained on location". They further argued that "mechanically recorded materials are reviewed in their entirety" (p.27).

Recently, there has been considerable philosophical debate as to what qualitative research entails, for as Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out, there are a number of "aliases" for the term, including "postpositivistic", "ethnographic", and "phenomenological". Adherents to these various schools of thought have various predelictions as to what "method" one is to use in order to do qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba however maintain that such research is not defined "at the level of method but at the level of paradigm" (p.250). Owens (1982) has argued that fundamental to this paradigm

> is the view that the real view that we encounter "out there" is such a dynamic system that all of the parts are so interrelated that one part inevitably influences the other parts. To understand the reality of the world requires acceptance of the notion that the parts cannot be separated bit by bit, for careful examination without distorting the system that one seeks to understand. The parts must be examined as best as possible in the context of the whole (p.6).

He stipulated that in such inquiries, the researcher should

> (1) employ direct contact between investigators and actors in the situation as a means of collecting data, (2) use emergent strategies to design the study rather than a priori specification, (3) develop categories from the examination of the data themselves after collection and (4) do not attempt to generalize the findings to a universe beyond that bounded by the study (p.6).

Since the primary aim of this study was to describe and interpret what occurred within big book experiences in classrooms, the qualitative paradigm was chosen thereby enhancing ecological validity and relevance to instruction. As well, the immersion in the classroom contexts permitted a deeper understanding of the character of big book experiences as they evolved over time. In conducting this research, the guidelines below were followed.

Foreshadowed Problems

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) "no inquiry, regardless of which paradigm may guide it can be conducted in the absence of a focus " (p. 226). Bogdan and Biklen (1982), in a similar vein, stated :

> Whether stated or not, all research is guided by some theoretical base and researchers use it to help collect and analyze data. Theory helps data cohere and enables research to go beyond an aimless unsystematic piling up of accounts (p. 30).

McMillan and Schumacher (1984) proposed that qualitative research begins with "foreshadowed problems" which they defined as "broadly phrased questions about the setting ". They elaborated, that included would be questions "about what happens, why it happens, and how it happens"(p. 311).

Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, a series of broadly based questions was generated to guide the research in this manner. These questions which are listed in Appendix A were grouped under the following headings :

-interactions within teacher-child dyadic relationships

-interactions within a teacher-whole group situation

-interactions within a teacher-high/low achieving student relationships.

In Lincoln and Guba's terms, these questions served as a focus not a constraint. As the study progressed there was considerable modification, deletion and addition.

Making Contacts

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) conceptualized the general design of qualitative research as a funnel.

> The start of the study is the wide end : the researchers scout for possible places and people that might be the subject or the data, find the location they think they want to study, and then cast a net widely trying to judge the feasibility of the site or data source for

their purpose (p. 59).

This metaphor aptly describes the process used in this study. In order to provide information on the study's focal question, various plans regarding the number of teachers to be involved, were entertained. These ranged from a one class period survey of about twenty teachers to a study over one semester of a single teacher. The eventual decision was to study two teachers over a semester. The rationale for this decision was based on a number of considerations. It was possible that shared big book experiences may have constituted a cycle that would not have been brought to closure in a single session. Interactions could conceivably have changed over time and this would be brought to light if the two classrooms were observed over a longer time period. Furthermore, by observing only two classrooms, the researcher, in the words of Guthrie and Hall (1984), would be able to "immerse himself into the daily lives of the process being studied . . . trying to learn their ways of behaving and organizing their world " (p. 96). Also, observing two teachers over a period of time would allow for the teachers and students to become less sensitive to the presence of the recording instruments and the researcher. A factor in choosing two teachers as opposed to one was the security and probability of still having at least one classroom to observe should one teacher decide to drop out of the study.

In August and early September 1985, fellow graduate students, language arts consultants, practicum associates and reading specialists were consulted to identify grade one teachers who were using big books as an integral part of their reading program. Eight such teachers were subsequently identified.

Formal permission to conduct the study was first obtained from the School Board, which was located in a large urban area. The principals of

the eight schools were contacted to get their permission to talk to the teachers in order to describe the purpose and nature of the study and to seek their cooperation in participating.

Narrowing the Focus

Three of the teachers contacted indicated, at the time of telephoning, that they did not wish to participate in the study for a variety of reasons. The other five teachers indicated that they were interested, at least tentatively and the researcher made an appointment to visit each of them to describe the study more fully and to discuss with them the parameters of their participation.

During the initial visits, one teacher decided, after further thought, that she did not wish to participate. The other four, however, were still interested in participating in the study. At this point it was decided to select two of the four teachers.

Two of the teachers - Mrs. Anthony and Mrs. Windsor - seemed to share many common characteristics. During initial conversations with them, they articulated similar philosophies of using big books. They both worked in self contained grade one classrooms with a mixed ethnic student population. They both had access to approximately the same quantity of big books. The schools in which they taught were of similar size in terms of student population and both were located in suburban areas exhibiting similar demographics and socioeconomic strata. Thus, it was decided that these two relatively homogeneous contexts would provide a significantly large data pool.

After the two teachers had been decided upon, permission was then sought from the parents of the children involved for the data collection to proceed. A letter explaining the nature of the study along with a release form granting the researcher permission to videotape the children were

sent to the parents (See Appendix B and C). While waiting for the permission forms to be returned by the parents, the researcher visited each of the classrooms on several occasions. During the initial visit, each teacher introduced the researcher to the children and informed them that he would be visiting the classroom during the coming weeks. Subsequently, one-half day was spent in each classssroom where the researcher's role was that of an observer. During each of these visits, time was spent with the teachers discussing the study, the children, and the particular school setting. In a further attempt to desensitize the children and teacher to the researcher's presence, the videotaping equipment was set up and operated for a half day without the researcher actually collecting the data.

DATA COLLECTION

By mid-October, consent forms had been returned and formal data collection began. The researcher observed Mrs. Anthony's class from approximately 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday and Mrs. Windsor's class from 9:00 a.m. to 12: 00 a.m. on Wednesday and Thursday. These times were arranged according to teacher preference and this schedule was followed over the course of the data collection.

The researcher arrived at each school at least one hour prior to the commencement of the session in order to set up and test the videotaping equipment before the children arrived in the classroom. On most of these occasions, the researcher had the opportunity to converse informally with the teachers. Quite frequently they briefly described their plans for the upcoming session.

The manner in which data were collected was as follows.

Participant Observation

Bogdan and Bilken (1982) described the role of the participant observer.

> In one way researchers join the subjects but in another way they remain detached. They unobtrusively keep a written record of what happens as well as collect other forms of descriptive data. They attempt to learn from the subjects but not necessarily be like the subjects. They may participate in these activities but on a more limited basis and they do not compete for prestige or status (p.119).

Guthrie and Hall (1984) saw the role of participant observer as a continuum ranging from "non participant observation in which the researcher merely observes to real participant observation in which the researcher assumes the role of teacher's aid or helper" (p 96). For the majority of time spent in the classrooms, the researcher's role was that of non participant observer. However the role fluctuated from time to time on the continuum described by Guthrie and Hall. To remain a non participant observer in grade one classrooms with more than twenty exuberant children is a difficult task and the researcher quickly found himself being used as a resource person in that individual children would approach the researcher and request the spelling of a particular word or the identification of a word with which he or she was having difficulty. Care was taken to simply provide the information requested and not engage in strategy lessons since the researcher did not wish to provide the children with strategies which may not have been in keeping with those taught by the teacher. As well, the researcher did not wish to provide children with strategies which they could conceivably subsequently use and thus influence the data. For although the researcher realized that his mere presence influenced behaviour, every attempt was made to keep such influence at a minimal. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) spoke to the issue of "observer effect" but suggested that "almost all research is confounded by this problem " (p. 43).

Fieldnotes

McMillan and Schumacher (1984) suggested that "fieldnotes are

written while the observer is in the field as the events occur . . ."(p.319). The researcher, in the fieldnotes, followed as closely as possible the advice of Bogdan and Biklen (1982) that

> The qualitative research approach demands that the world be approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue which might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied (p.28).

In an attempt to minimize the influence which notetaking had on the children and the teachers, the researcher explained to them prior to the data collection that he would be taking notes and briefly described their function. As well, every effort was made to keep this activity as discrete as possible without appearing to be clandestine.

Several types of data were recorded through the fieldnotes. They were used to record the ebb and flow of events within the sessions as the children and teacher moved back and forth between reading/rereading of the various books and activities related to them. This included the time parameters of each activity and each reading. Any behaviour which appeared to be idiosyncratic or unique was noted. An attempt was made to describe the general atmosphere of the context. For example, if a child or children appeared confused or disinterested, this was noted. Behaviors which the researcher felt were out of the range of the video equipment were recorded. Finally, the bibliographic information and the physical format of the books used were noted.

Videotaping

Guthrie and Hall (1984) advocated the use of audio and/or audio visual equipment on the basis that "the researcher is able to examine the behaviours thoroughly and repeatedly" (p. 95). They went on to defend the use of such equipment by arguing that "social interaction is so complex that any on the spot recording of behaviour is suspect" (p. 95). The

concerns articulated by Guthrie and Hall were factors in the decision to videotape the shared big book experiences. In addition to allowing the researcher to examine the data repeatedly, it also allowed the researcher to have peers check his descriptions and interpretations of the big book experiences.

A second factor influencing the decision to utilize videotaping was the desire to capture important non-verbal behaviours such as pointing to print and pointing to illustrations during the actual reading of big books. In addition, the videotaped data would complement the fieldnotes and both together would provide a composite picture of the classroom context.

Two tripod mounted video cameras each with its own video cassette recorder were used. One of the cameras was focused on the teacher and the the text being read or on the teacher and the print being discussed in the case of related activities. The other camera was focused on the children.

Each of the cameras had an extendable microphone. In addition, an omni-directional PZM microphone was placed in either the center of the classroom when the children sat in their desks or on the floor in the center of the group when the children sat on the floor. The videocassette recorders had an audio mixing capability allowing the simultaneous recording of the signal from the PZM microphone and from the microphone attached to the camera.

At the beginning of each big book experience, both videocassette recorders were activated and left to run. The researcher then sat at an appropriate vantage point to record on the spot observations in the fieldnotes.

During the observational period, a total of 10 hours of videotape was recorded in Mrs. Anthony's class and a total of 12 hours was recorded in Mrs. Windsor's class.

Investigator's Journal

Guthrie and Hall (1984) and McMillan and Schmacher (1984), among a number of writers, recommended that the researcher engaged in qualitative research keep a journal or diary. They stressed that entries be written up as soon as possible after the researcher left the field. As Guthrie and Hall pointed out, a journal provides an additional "check" on the other data and has the advantage of being "relatively free from the reconstruction of memory, having been written close to the experience" (p. 98).

Each day upon returning home from the schools, journal entries were written. Included were the researcher's impressions of what had transpired on a particular day, descriptions of unique or unexpected occurrences and recollections of conversations with the teachers and children. The fieldnotes of the day were usually reviewed and observations made in the field triggered further recollection. When significant issues which seemed to be related to the study were discussed in conversations with peers, they were also noted in the journal. In addition, personal feelings about the research were also recorded.

Interviews

After the videotaping had been completed, the researcher returned to each of the schools to interview the teachers and six children from each of the classrooms. Each of the interviews was "semi-structured" (Guthrie and Hall, 1984, p.96) which essentially meant that although the researcher had compiled a set of questions in advance to guide the interview, they were not rigidly adhered to and other topics and leads were pursued during the interviews.

The interviews with the teachers centered around their professional and academic background and their perceptions of the use of big books in

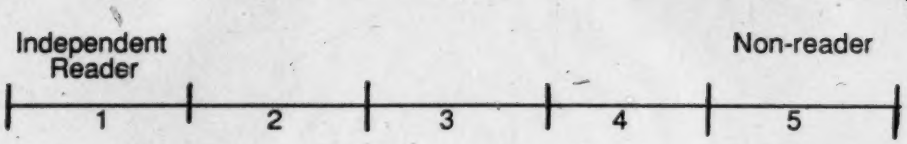
their reading programs. With the children, the interviews centered around their perceptions of reading in general as well as their perceptions of big books. Three high achieving students and three low achieving students were interviewed from each class to see whether there were differences and/or similarities in the perceptions of these groups. Six mounted photographs, each depicting some form of reading or writing were presented to the children during the interview. Through questioning, the children were prompted to respond to the reading/writing event captured in each of the photographs. (The photographs are described in Appendix D).

Over the course of the data collection, the researcher had numerous conversations with Mrs. Anthony and Mrs. Windsor and a large number of children. Although these conversations were not construed as interviews in the formal sense, much pertinent data emerged from such conversations and they were seen as parallel with and supplementary to the more formal interviews.

Rating Scale

There were two purposes for using a rating scale. First of all, the researcher wanted to ascertain whether teachers interacted more frequently with children perceived as being high achievers than they did with children perceived as being low achievers in terms of reading development in shared big book experiences. Research in traditional classrooms (eg. Johnson and Winograd ,1983) has shown this is the case. Secondly, the researcher wanted to ensure that he "zeroed in on" both high achieving and low achieving children through observation. As well, he wanted to interview both high achieving and low achieving children at the conclusion of videotaping.

Each teacher rated her children on a five point Likert scale.



The definition of a reader was based on Lass' (1983) work who considered as an independent reader one who

> perceives himself as being a reader, (b) has developed reading tastes, (c) gets meaning from printed sources, (d) decodes some words independently using phonic or structural cues (perhaps in conjunction with context to read words never identified for him/her) and (e) is able to read books independently without memorization (p.509).

In delineating the points on the Likert scale, the following characteristics identified by Lass were applied.

1 indicated the child exhibited all of the characteristics.

5 indicated the child exhibited none of the characteristics.

2 indicated the child exhibited four of the characteristics of which a and c had to be included.

4 indicated the child exhibited only one of the characteristics.

3 was discretionary on the part of the teacher as being between 2 and 4.

It was initially intended to have both teachers rank the children at the beginning of the study and at the midpoint of the study since it was felt that children's knowledge may have changed over time. Unfortunately Mrs. Anthony only completed the initial ranking in spite of regular reminders from the researcher. Mrs. Windsor ranked the children at both points and the changes in ranking were considered when the data was analyzed.

DATA ANALYSIS

The bulk of the data for analysis emerged from the verbatim transcriptions of the videotapes and focused on the various interactions

that had occurred within the classroom context. The definition of interaction was based on Bloome's (1980) notion which he defined as " the exchange of messages or a single idea" (p.9). The researcher began to transcribe the videotapes after the first day of fieldwork and continued to transcribe over the course of the study and into the subsequent months. The videotapes yielded a total of 1211 pages of verbatim transcriptions of the interactions which occurred in the classroom.

Upon completion of the transcription, the videotapes from each classroom were then viewed again in their entirety and the researcher checked for accuracy of transcription and highlighted data which appeared to be unusually significant. The transcribed data were then divided into "message units". Kontos (1981) defined message units as "meaningful statements or questions" (p.10). Both verbal and non-verbal behaviours were identified as message units (Kontos, p.10).

It was then necessary to devise a category system within which the message units would be interpreted. In order to do this, the questions that had been generated to guide the collection of data were reviewed and the transcripts were read and reread to detect patterns of occurring behaviours. A list of behaviours were drawn up which appeared capable of representing the transcript data. In order to check the comprehensibility of this set of behaviours, the transcripts were again checked to see if all data could be accounted for by this list. A total of 37 behaviours were listed which seemed to be unwieldy in describing the nature of shared big book experiences. Consequently, the investigator engaged in a narrowing down process by which behaviours were grouped to represent various categories. Eventually categories of interactive behaviours were identified and are as follows:

Reader Participation
A1-Teacher reads

A2-Teacher and children read
A3-Children read as a group
A4-Child reads alone

Nature of Children's Reading
B1-Echo/mumble reading
B2-Completion reading

Interactive Behaviours-Questioning
C1-Prediction
C2-Confirmation
C3-Specification
C4-Elaboration
C5-Clarification

Interactive Behaviours-Other
D1-Prediction
D2-Transcendence
D3-Elaboration
D4-Clarification
D5-Prompting/Cueing
D6-Competency
D7-Directions related to reading
D8-Acceptance/Confirmation
D9-Non-acceptance/Non-confirmation
D10-Establishment of meaning prior to meaning
D11-Specification

Attention To Input
E1-Attention to print
E2-Attention to graphophonic information
E3-Attention to illustrations
E4-Using booklike language
E5-Correction of miscues

Nature Of Child Chosen For Participation
F1-High print aware child chosen
F2-Low print aware child chosen

Knowledge Developed
G1-Development/display sense of reading
G2-Development/display sense of narrative
G3-Children's concepts of big books

Locus of Control
H1-Teacher control - outside the lesson
H2-Organizational routines - within the lesson
H3-Child initiated reading/activity
H4-Requests

Within the shared big book experiences the teacher usually engaged in three types of activities: sharing the big book, reading small books and using activities related to the big or small book. Since it was felt that

each of these had a slightly different focus, the categories of behaviour were tallied for each activity. Because of the large number of behaviours and categories it was decided to define each category set as they are being described in Chapters IV, V, and VI.

Validity and Reliability

The category system may be said to include both construct and ecological validity. Construct validity is claimed in the sense that the categories chosen were influenced by the literature in the field, and ecological validity is claimed since the categories were chosen to represent the behaviours which actually occurred in the classrooms during the shared big book experiences.

In addition, several techniques were utilized in order to avoid what Owens (1982) referred to as "unreliable, biased or opinionated data " (p.10). These techniques are:

Triangulation

Denzin (1978), Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Owens (1982) identified triangulation as one means of enhancing the credibility of qualitative research. Denzin suggested that "triangulation can take many forms but its basic feature will be the combination of two or more research strategies in the study . . ." (p. 308). The use of the multiplicity of data sources (i.e. fieldnotes, videotapes, investigator's journal, interviews, and rating scales) constituted the use of triangulation in this study.

Fidelity

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), fidelity means "the ability of the investigators later to reproduce exactly the data as they become evident to him or her in the field" (240). They suggested that "clearly the greatest fidelity can be obtained using audio or video recordings" (p. 240). This researcher's repeated viewing of the videotapes in conjunction with

the other sources of data during analysis were seen as examples of the utilization of this phenomenon.

Peer Consultation

The credibility of qualitative research is also enhanced through "peer debriefing" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.308) or "peer consultation" (Owens, 1982, p.15). At regular intervals during the various phases of the study, the researcher met with fellow graduate students to dialogue about the study. During these sessions, new questions were raised, interpretations were rehashed and sometimes refined, and new leads were investigated. In addition, the supervisor of the study read all of the data, viewed portions of the videotapes and through questioning and suggestions, helped the researcher refine his own thinking and to see problems which had not previously been identified.

Inter-rater Reliability

A second rater independently categorized 10% of the data according to the system devised. Percentage of agreement was 90%.

SUMMARY

The nature of the overriding questions which guided this study necessitated the use of qualitative research whereby shared big book experiences in two grade one classrooms were observed over the course of a school term . Procedures were followed to enhance the trustworthiness of the research and data analysis proceeded from patterns and trends which emerged from the data.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTEXT: FREEDOMS AND CONSTRAINTS

The main purpose of this study was to describe and interpret the manner in which big book experiences unfolded in two grade one classrooms. It is first necessary to provide a context for this description and interpretation. This is the intent of this chapter.

Setting I (Riverview)

Riverview School is located in a large, relatively new housing development in suburban Edmonton.The housing development is comprised of a fairly large concentration of low-rise appartments and townhouses in addition to suburban,single family homes.The housing development is home to a large number of new immigrants to Canada and the population of Riverview School, like the population of the housing development, can perhaps be best described as mixed ethnic.

Riverview School

Five hundred children attend Riverview School. It is relatively new and includes such amenities as a fairly well stocked library, a collection of audio-visual equipment, and a gymnasium. It contains 22 classrooms and has a teaching staff of 27, five of whom are resource room teachers.

The Classroom

Mrs. Anthony's classroom was decorated with a variety of pictures and posters. In addition,the alphabet and charts containing various items of print were displayed on the walls. A classroom library containing a representative sample of children's literature was located in one corner. A shelf on one wall of the classroom held a variety of resources including traditional worksheet type phonics activities, collections of poetry, and a collection of teacher resource (i.e. ideas) books.

The physical arrangement of this classroom reflects a traditional

orientation. Single student desks were arranged in rows facing the chalkboard with the teacher's desk at the front of the classroom.The children usually sat in their desks at the commencement of each session (i.e. after lunch and after recess) and also when they were engaged in independent activities such as writing. There was a fairly large,carpeted open space at the back of the classroom which contained several easels and it was in this area that many of the activities that comprised Big Book experiences were conducted.

The Children

There were 23 children in Mrs. Anthony's classroom. They, like the population of the school in general, reflected a variety of ethnic origins and a diverse range of cultural and racial backgrounds. Seven of the children were non-Caucasion. Ethnic groups included Asian, Afro-American, East Indian, Metis, and Native.

The reading development of the children was quite varied but may be considered typical of a grade one population. At the beginning of the study, some children were identified by the teacher as independent readers while others were identified as essentially non-readers. One child spent part of the day in an E.S.L. class; five of the children were repeating grade one.

Mrs. Anthony

Mrs. Anthony received her teacher training at the University of Alberta. She was originally a student in the Faculty of Science but transferred to the Faculty of Education where she completed the Early Childhood Education program in the Department of Elementary Education. Upon graduation, she taught kindergarten for five years and for the last three years has taught grade one.

Mrs. Anthony was orginally introduced to Big Books through

inservice sessions offered by Marlene and Robert McCracken. She has used Big Books for two years. She perceives herself to be a "whole language " teacher and considers Big Books to be an integral part of her reading program. Although Mrs. Anthony used basal readers on occasion, she suggested that she didn't use the basal series in the "traditional manner". She explained that she had "three or four" basal series in her classroom and that instead of "doing" a basal "story by story",the children read the basals at their own pace.

FORMATS,ACCESSIBILITY, AND SELECTION OF BIG BOOKS

Formats

The term "big books" possibly connotes to the reader, enlarged, glossy, colorful books that are commercially published. Few teachers can afford the luxury of purchasing a sufficient number of such books and they are forced to improvise. This was true of Mrs. Anthony. Her repertoire of 27 Big Books included commercially published big books (7); those written by the teacher and students on 12 inch by 20 inch construction paper (5); those printed on sentence strips (3); those printed on large, lined sheets of language experience paper (2); those projected on a screen from an overhead projector (2); and those constructed by the teacher on 14 inch by 28 inch bristol board (8).

Genre

In addition to differing in physical format, the big books also differed in terms of text genre. Eight of the books used had a narrative structure. The rest were either verse or song or patterned language books. (Eg. Black Witch, Black Witch, What do you see?, I see a brown cat looking at me. Brown Cat, Brown Cat . . .) Mrs. Anthony expressed her concern with what she perceived as a lack of big books that had a narrative structure.

> Journal entry, November 4: Mrs. Anthony initiated a conversation today about using big books ... She expressed concern about the fact

that many of the big books available do not have a good narrative structure. Although she acknowledged the need to have children read books which contain repetitive and predictable language, she felt that children also need exposure to books which have a plot.

Selection

The selection of big books seemed to be entirely the domain of the teacher as on no occasion were children observed selecting the books they wished to experience. To some degree, there was an attempt to select books according to theme. For example, a Hallowe'en theme was evident in many of the books chosen toward the end of October. However, books outside this theme were also used at this time.

ORGANIZING THE BIG BOOK EXPERIENCE

An analysis of the materials used made it necessary to distinguish a big book experience from a shared big book. A shared big book is described as the focus ~~on~~ and development of the print/content of the story, verse or patterned language in large print format. A big book experience includes a shared big book, plus small books and related activities. These activities were designed to extend the content in some way or were related in the sense that they were language activities. These activities included predicting prior to reading, checking the accuracy of predictions after reading, discussing prior to and after reading, completing cloze and minimal cue activities after reading, sequencing activities, recognizing words in isolation, brainstorming, and writing which usually involved completing patterns from the big books. In some instances, a big book was read one day and activities based upon the particular book were completed the following day. In some instances, the big book experience consisted only of the actual reading (sharing) of the big book.

Purposes of the Big Book Experience

In a semi-structured interview with Mrs. Anthony, subsequent to the

data collection portion of this study, she differentiated between what she saw as being two purposes for using big books. She saw one overriding purpose of teaching (eg. development of a particular skill); she saw "for fun" as the other overriding purpose.

The observational data revealed that these purposes were indeed actualized in her classroom. Within the teaching purpose, two foci seemed predominant, text and print. When text was the focus, the teacher while helping children construct meaning of the content, also required attention to the text (words and sentences). For example, children were required to participate in the oral reading of the text and miscues were generally not tolerated. When print was the focus, the children were required to attend to isolated words and letters, sound-symbol relationships and spelling.

The first purpose identified by Mrs. Anthony - teaching - dominated many of the big book experiences. However her two purposes were not mutually exclusive for even when Mrs. Anthony's overall purpose was "teaching", the fun aspect of the reading often permeated the experience. A case in point was Black Witch, Black Witch where the children's pleasure and enthusiasm was quite obvious, even though the teacher's overall purpose seemed to be to teach the particular language pattern of the text. Mrs. Anthony always seemed conscious of using big books for teaching and this is perhaps best summarized in the November 4 entry of the journal.

> She (Mrs. Anthony) feels that she has done too many big books. She mentioned the number 20 and she feels that she is going too fast. She suggested that the kids don't know the words in the big books and that she would have to review. She remarked, "What's the point in doing big books if kids don't know the words in them?"

Developing the Big Book Experience

The number of big books, the sequence in which they were developed and the nature of related activities are shown in Table 4.1.

Overall, 27 big books were used. The number of big books used each

Table 4-1

Overview of big book experiences

	OCTOBER				NOVEMBER					
	15	21	22	28	29	4	5	12	18	19
In A Dark, Dark Wood (F)	RBR	BRR								
Teeny Tiny Woman (U)	BR									
What Can You See ? (U)		BR	s	BR						
This Is the Way the Witches Fly(F)		BR	B							
I Thought I Saw(F)		B								
New Fangled Witch (F)			RBR							
Old Witch(U)			B							
Five Little Pumpkins(F)			B							
Chester / Alice (F)			B							
Allison's Camel (F)			B							
Black Witch, Balck Witch(U)				BR						
Sally the Cat (F)				B						
Hallowe'en Stories (F)				B						
The Wicked Witch(F)					B					
Jack O'Lantern (U)					BRB					
The Pumpkin (U)					B					
Nursery Rhymes(F)					s					
The Bus Ride (U)						BR				
I Like This Book(U)						BR		RB		
Things I Ride (F)							RBR			
The Bus (F)							B			
The Farmer and the Skunk(U)								RB		
The Farmer and the Pig (U)									RBR	
Bingo(F)									B	
One Pig Two Pigs (U)										BR
Five Little Frogs(F)										B
I Know An Old Lady (F)										B
One Elephant ,Two Elephants(F)										B

Key: B-Big Book R-Big Book (Related Activity) s-Small Book r-Small Book(Related Activity)
U-Unfamiliar F-Familiar

day varied. On October 15, two books were used while on October 22, five were used. On the other days, the number of books used fell within this range. Sixteen of the big books were used during the first half of the period of observation (i.e. up to and including October 25). The decrease in the number of big books used could be related to Mrs. Anthony's concern about "going too fast".

The familiarity and unfamiliarity of the big books to the children usually became obvious during the taping sessions in that the children would tell the teacher if a particular book was familiar to them. On other occasions the teacher would remark to the children that they had "done" a particular book in kindergarten. In instances where this did not happen, the teacher was asked after the taping session whether a particular book was familiar or unfamiliar to the children. Of course, in some instances, books were familiar to individual children or to several children but unfamiliar to a large majority of the children. In this case, the books were considered unfamiliar. Of the 27 books used, 15 were familiar to the students. Included amongst these were books written cooperatively by the students and the teacher. There was no particular pattern as to when familiar versus unfamiliar books appeared over time except that both familiar and unfamiliar books were interspersed.

On four occasions, a big book experience extended beyond a single class period or a particular day. In a Dark, Dark Wood was used on October 15 and October 22, What Can You See? on October 21, 22, and 28, This is the Way the Witches Fly on October 21 and October 22, and I Like This Book on November 4 and 12. Three of these occasions occurred within the first four days of observation suggesting a "tailing off" of this phenomenon as the term progressed. However, it is possible that big book experiences occurred across days when the researcher was not present.

Of the 27 big books, thirteen were followed by related activities. Four of these thirteen books were familiar. Of the fourteen books that were not accompanied by related activities, twelve were familiar. This suggests that familiarity/unfamiliarity were factors influencing the decision to include related activities in the big book experience. Nine of the books which were accompanied by related activities were patterned books, two were verse, and two were narratives. This suggests that text genre was also a factor which influenced the decision to include related activities in the big book experience.

The most common organizational pattern (7 out of 14) of the big book experience was to read the big book (with the children) first and then follow it with an activity (Eg. Teeny Tiny Woman). Other patterns included: completing an activity, reading the big book, and completing another activity (Eg. New Fangled Witch, October 21); completing an activity first and then reading the big book (Eg. The Farmer and The Skunk, November 12); and reading the big book first and following it with two activities (Eg. In A Dark, Dark Wood, October 21).

Related activities were used on each of the days of observation, suggesting that for Mrs. Anthony, related activities seem to be an inherent part of big book experiences.

PARTICIPANTS AND THE BIG BOOK EXPERIENCE

Control

Dewey (1963) proposed that "education is a social process" and that the teacher "as the most mature member of the group . . . has a peculiar responsibility for the conduct of the interactions and intercommunications which are the very life of the group as a community" (p. 58). In other words, the teacher is in control. Both the degree and manner by which the teacher maintains control may vary. In terms of degree, she may decide to

take complete control herself or to share control with the children; at other times, children may demand and be granted control.

Degree of Teacher Control Through Allocation of Talk Time

Bloome (1986) suggested that the degree of control in the classroom is determined by the allocation of linguistic resources. For example, in a classroom where teacher talk is predominant, the teacher is exercising control through the utilization of the talk time available. Research (eg. Dillon and Searle, 1981) suggests teacher talk is dominant in many classrooms. To examine this, the ratio of student interactions and teacher interactions to the total interactions were tabulated. A message unit was considered an interaction. Of the total number of interactions (5959), 531 involved shared teacher/child talk and were not included in calculating the percent of talk time. The number and percentages of interactions by teacher and children alone are shown in Table 4.2. Teacher talk was dominant in both big books and related activities with the proportion of teacher talk in both being approximately the same.

Another way of looking at control in class (social) situations is to note the specific kinds of talk that are often used for control purposes. Greene (1983) has proposed that lessons are essentially social constructs. She elaborated:

> Lessons ... are defined as constructed by what people are doing, how they are doing it, and when they are doing it. Lessons are constructed by people interacting with and building on their own messages and the messages of others as they work together (p.4).

Table 4.2

Allocation of talk time

	Teacher	Children	Total
Big Books	1616(63%)	935(37%)	2551
Related Activities	1919(67%)	958(33%)	2877
Total	3535(65%)	1890(35%)	5428

Control Through Relational Meaning

Researchers such as Allington (1978), Bloome (1981), Greene (1983), Gumperz (1972), Johnson and Winograd (1983) have documented the complex social control interactions that are operant in reading classes.

According to Feinberg and Soltis (1985) class messages take on a larger or relational meaning in terms of the relationship between teacher and student. For example, "sit in your chair" has the specific meaning of occupy your chair, but in terms of the larger context, it may mean "I need to get on with this lesson and I don't want interruptions and you are interrupting, so be quiet".

Within Mrs. Anthony's class, four specific kinds of linguistic statements signified relational meaning. One kind of statement included those of a disciplinary nature (Eg. Mrs. Anthony: "Go back and sit down please and come back properly"). A second comprised those which were organizational in nature and which were necessary to expedite the lesson. (Eg. Mrs. Anthony: "There's not going to be any more room [to put the word on the language experience chart]. Have to put it in there"). Children's attempts, both successful and unsuccessful, to initiate reading constituted the third kind of statement (Eg. Child, after the class had just finished reading Five Little Frogs, "Can we do it again?"). The fourth type of statement involved children's requests other than those to initiate reading.(Eg. Child:"Can I borrow Toni's felts?")

Within big books, disciplinary and organizational interactions on the part of the teacher accounted for 87% of the total. (See Table 4.3) The teacher, of course, was the source of both these types of interactions. No patterns in either of these types of interactions were obvious over time or across genre. For some big books (I Thought I Saw, This is the Way the

Witches Fly, Things I Ride, and The Farmer and the Pig), there were unusally large numbers of organizational type interactions. In the case of I Thought I Saw and Things I Ride, this was probably attributable to the fact that these are examples of texts composed jointly by the teacher and students. This activity, by its very nature, demands much organizational routine. However, with This is the Way the Witches Fly, there was nothing about the text which accounts for the amount of organizational routine.

Table 4.3

Relational Meanings of Interactions within Big Books

	Discipline	Routines	Child Initiates	Requests	Total
In A Dark, Dark Wood (F)	10	9	1	1	
Teeny Tiny Woman (U)		1			
What Can You See ? (U)	1	14		4	
This Is the Way the Witches Fly (F)	8	26		2	
I Thought I Saw (F)	3	22			
New Fangled Witch (F)	3	5			
Old Witch (U)					
Five Little Pumpkins (F)	3	9		2	
Chester / Alice (F)		4	1		
Allison's Camel (F)	1				
Black Witch,Black Witch (U)		5			
Sally the Cat (F)		1			
Hallowe'en Stories (F)		13			
The Wicked Witch (F)		1			
Jack O'Lantern (U)					
The Pumpkin (U)	1	8		1	
The Bus Ride (U)	11	6			
I Like This Book (U)	2	10	2		
Things I Ride (F)	6	49	2	3	
The Bus (F)	2		5		
The Farmer and the Skunk (U)	4	5	5	1	
The Farmer and the Pig (U)	2	21	2		
Bingo (F)	3	12	1		
One Pig,Two Pigs (U)	4	9	6	1	
Five Little Frogs (F)	2	7	1		
I Know An Old Lady (F)		2	2		
One Elephant,Two Elephants(F)		3	3		
Total	66(19%)	242(68%)	31(9%)	15(4%)	354

In the case of student initated statements, the frequency does increase over time. This is probably attributable to the increasing confidence the children were gaining in their competence as readers and

the concomitant desire to publically display such competence. Student requests were the least common of all the interactions.

Within related activities, (Table 4.4), the ratios to the total of disciplinary, organizational and student request interactions, were quite similar to those of the big books. The ratio of students' attempts to

Table 4.4

Relational Meanings of Interactions within Related Activities

	Discipline	Routines	Child Initiates	Requests	Total
In A Dark, Dark Wood (F)	3	9		2	
Teeny Tiny Woman (U)	10	24		3	
What Can You See ? (U)		3			
New Fangled Witch (F)	4	13	1	1	
Black Witch,Black Witch (U)	3	13			
Sally the Cat (F)					
Hallowe'en Stories (F)	13	33	3		
Jack O'Lantern (U)		3			
The Pumpkin (U)	2	10		1	
The Bus Ride (U)	1	4			
Things I Ride (F)	4	32	3	1	
The Farmer and the Skunk (U)	3	5		2	
The Farmer and the Pig (U)	15	38	5	5	
One Pig,Two Pigs (U)		6		2	
Total	58(21%)	193(69%)	12(4%)	17(6%)	280

initiate was less during related activities (4% versus 9%). This decrease across contexts probably relates to the nature of these two contexts in that the related activities are more goal directed and task specific with the consequence that the students felt more compelled to complete the assigned task and less inclined to initiate something new. Also, big books are more "shared" in nature and students were probably more inclined to try to exert some influence as to the direction the experience was to take.

Control Through Selection of Children

A final way of looking at how teachers exert control within classrooms is through the selection of children to participate in the lesson. Johnson and Winograd (1983) for example found that teachers tended to select high achieving children more frequently than low

achieving children for participation in lessons.

Within big books, specific children were selected to participate for a number of purposes including : helping to build appropriate schema, predicting, reading a part of the text, elaborating on some semantic aspect of the text, specifying and confirming what had unfolded in a text, and recognizing particular words in a text. Table 4.5 shows the numbers of specific times that high and low achieving children were chosen to participate in big book experiences.

Table 4.5

Selection of Children within Big Books

	High Achieving	Low Achieving	Total
In A Dark, Dark Wood (F)	7	5	
Teeny Tiny Woman (U)			
What Can You See ? (U)	11	9	
This Is the Way the Witches Fly (F)	4	2	
I Thought I Saw (F)	7	12	
New Fangled Witch (F)	5	5	
Old Witch (U)			
Five Little Pumpkins (F)			
Chester / Alice (F)			
Allison's Camel (F)			
Black Witch,Black Witch (U)			
Sally the Cat (F)			
Hallowe'en Stories (F)			
The Wicked Witch (F)			
Jack O'Lantern (U)	1		
The Pumpkin (U)	4	4	
The Bus Ride (U)		1	
I Like This Book (U)	8	4	
Things I Ride (F)	26	27	
The Bus (F)		1	
The Farmer and the Skunk (U)	13	1	
The Farmer and the Pig (U)	1	2	
Bingo (F)	2	3	
One Pig,Two Pigs (U)	7	5	
Five Little Frogs (F)	1	1	
I Know An Old Lady (F)	1		
One Elephant,Two Elephants (F)			
Total	98(54%)	82(46%)	180

There were a number of instances in this context when specific children were not selected for participation (Eg. Five Little Pumpkins).

This is attributable to the shared nature of the reading in many of the big books in that the teacher and children read as a group and the teacher had no purpose for selecting specific children. In other instances there was considerable specific child involvement. In Things I Ride, for example, specific children were selected on 53 occasions. This book was being cooperatively read as it was being written and the teacher called upon specific children to specify what was to be in the text.

Overall, within big books, high achieving children were selected 54% of the time. Familiarity/unfamiliarity was a factor in selecting specific children for participation in that when the text was familiar, high and low achieving children were selected approximately equally (48% High, 52% Low). However, when the text was unfamiliar, the teacher selected high achieving children much more frequently (69%) than low achieving children (31%). Thus, it seems that this teacher was exemplifying Feuerstein's notion of "mediating competency". That is, with the familiar texts the teacher expected low achieving children to be as competent as the high achieving children and selected them equally. However, with unfamiliar texts, the teacher tended to select high achieving children whom she considered to be competent in dealing with the task.

Within related activities (Table 4.6), high achieving children were selected even more frequently than their low achieving peers as compared to the sharing of big books. It seems that when Mrs. Anthony's goal was to complete specific tasks, she was more inclined to enlist the assistance of high achieving children.

Overall, these findings corroborate those of Johnson and Winograd (1983) in that high achieving children were selected for participation more frequently than low achieving children. The fact that this tendency was more prominent in related activities could be attributable to the fact

Table 4.6

Selection of Children - Related Activities

	High Achieving	Low Achieving	Total
In A Dark, Dark Wood (F)	7	9	
Teeny Tiny Woman (U)	14	9	
What Can You See ? (U)	2		
New Fangled Witch (F)	8	3	
Black Witch,Black Witch (U)	2		
Sally the Cat (F)			
Hallowe'en Stories (F)	19	11.	
Jack O'Lantern (U)	6	5	
The Pumpkin (U)	4	2	
The Bus Ride (U)	4	8	
Things I Ride (F)	12	8	
The Farmer and the Skunk (U)	2		
The Farmer and the Pig (U)	2		
One Pig,Two Pigs (U)	2		
Total	86(61%)	55(49%)	141

that these activities were more task specific and goal directed than the reading of big books and the teacher was more inclined to select those children whom she saw as possessing the necessary competencies.

Setting II (Parkdale)

The community from which Parkdale School draws its students is similar in many respects to that of Riverview. It too is a newer suburban housing development with a mixture of apartments, townhouses and single family dwellings. Similarly too, many of the residents of the community are new immigrants to Canada and they reflect a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds and a diversity of cultures.

Parkdale School

Parkdale School also has a student population of five hundred. Of recent construction, it reflects a modern architectural design and like Riverview incorporates such amenities as a well stocked library, a gymnasium and an assortment of audio-visual and other teaching aids.

Parkdale School is what is termed an effective school-a designation currently being used by local school boards for schools where certain

administrative and teaching procedures are followed with the aim of improving instruction, student achievement, and overall functioning of the school. In addition, it has what appears to be a well organized and very active parent volunteer program.

The Classroom

The physical arrangement of Mrs. Windsor's classroom also reflected a traditional orientation with student desks in rows facing the chalkboard at the front of the classroom. There were two open spaces where children usually sat during sharing of big books; one at the front of the classroom between the chalkboard and the students' desks and one on the right side of the classroom toward the back. A chart with pockets to hold sentence strips hung on the wall near the second open space. A round table where children sometimes worked in small groups was also located within this area. At the back of the classroom stood a fairly large shelving unit where students kept their on-going work and on top of which the teacher kept various supplies, including resource books, some small children's books and some basal readers. Also located at the back was a fairly large rectangular table and here also children sometimes worked in small groups. The teacher's desk was in the left rear corner of the room; in the same corner stood a bookcase holding the classroom library which contained a variety of "easy books". Several large pillows were on the floor near the bookcase, and children were often permitted to go there to read independently and in pairs.

Mrs. Windsor's classroom was decorated with various posters and displays, including various forms of print such as poetry written on language experience charts, rules of behavior,and the alphabet.

The Children

There were 25 children in Mrs. Windsor's classroom. In addition, one

child, who had not attended kindergarten the year before but was of age to be in grade one, spent the mornings in a kindergarten class but returned to Mrs. Windsor for the afternoon sessions.

The mixed ethnic and diverse cultural nature of the community was also reflected in Mrs. Windsor's class. The seven non-Caucasions in the group included children of Asian, West Indian, East Indian, and Native ethnic origins.

A wide spectrum of reading ability was reflected in the children. At the beginning of the study, some children were already identified by the teacher as independent readers while others were identified as non-readers, with the majority of the children having abilities somewhere between these two extremes. During the period of observation, two of the children went to the resource room for "remedial reading" for twenty minutes per day. Initially, a third child also went to the resource room for remedial reading but this was discontinued by November 27 " because the resource room teacher felt that she wasn't benefitting" (Journal entry, November 27).

Mrs. Windsor

Mrs. Windsor is a graduate of a five year teacher education program in Elementary Education from a university in another province. This was her first year teaching at Parkdale. Prior to this year, she had taught various primary-elementary grades and spent some time as a resource room teacher.

She was also introduced to big books through inservice sessions offered by the McCrackens; in addition she has attended inservice sessions on big books provided by her school board for resource room teachers. She started using "a couple" of big books "three or four years ago" (from interview) but considered this to be her second year for using big books.

Although she considers herself to be a "whole language" teacher, Mrs. Windsor occasionally used traditional basal reader series by interspersing them throughout the year.

FORMATS, ACCESSIBILITY, AND SELECTION OF BIG BOOKS

Formats

Mrs. Windsor did not have access to a large selection of commercially published big books because of their cost. Consequently, only five of the big books she used were commercially published. Four of the big books were constructed on large (eg. 14 inch by 12 inch) sheets of bristol board or construction paper; four were printed on sentence strips; two were printed on lined language experience chart paper; and one was projected on a screen from an overhead projector. The small books that were used were generally commercially published. However, in some instances, teacher- constructed small books were also used in conjunction with a big book (Eg. Five Little Pumpkins, Black Cat, Black Cat). These books were usually photocopied on 8 1/2 " x 11 1/2 " coloured paper.

Genre

The books differed in genre as well as in physical format. Five of the books had a narrative structure (eg. Noisy Nora) while 13 were patterned language (eg. Black Cat, Black Cat) and 10 were verse or song (eg. Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater, Snowflakes Are Softly Falling).

Selection

Again the selection of big books seemed to be the perogative of the teacher. Theme seemed to guide the selection somewhat in that books relating to a Hallowe'en theme were used near the end of October and those exhibiting a Christmas theme were used toward the end of November, although other books outside the particular theme were also used (eg. Brown Bear, Brown Bear, October 31).

ORGANIZING THE BIG BOOK EXPERIENCE

The definition of big book experience and its component parts which was used to describe the organizational structure of lessons in Mrs. Anthony's class also applies here. The related activities were generally the same as those used by Mrs. Anthony. However, unlike Mrs. Anthony, Mrs. Windsor incorporated many small books into her reading program.

Purposes of the Big Book Experience

At the request of the researcher, Mrs. Windsor also elaborated upon what she saw as the purposes for using big books in an interview conducted after the video taping portion of this study had been completed:

> Researcher: "Why did you decide to use big books?"
> Mrs. Windsor: "I thought it was a way to get the children to read together - read in chorus and bring them together around me - to get the group working together."

She also saw big books as "a good way for children to learn about print and language " because they could see the larger print". Specifically, she felt that children would learn "left to right orientation" or "tracking", "sight words" and "use of context" through big books.

Unlike Mrs. Anthony, Mrs. Windsor did not describe big books as having a "for fun" function. The manner in which she described the utilization of big books also tends to confirm the notion that the overall purpose for using big books is to teach particular skills or particular knowledge. Rosenblatt (1980) called such reading "efferent" in that the attention is "focused primarily on what is carried away" (p. 387). The observed data revealed that Mrs. Windsor's stated purposes were realized within her classroom. As with Mrs. Anthony, she accomplished this by focusing on text and print. Reading for fun or what Rosenblatt referred to as "aesthetic reading" seemed at times to be a part of big book experiences. However, the teaching of particular skills and knowledge

seemed to be the dominant purpose.

Developing the Big Book Experience

The number of big books, the sequence in which they were used, and the nature of related activities are shown in Table 4.7.

Overall, 16 big books were used. Nine of the big books were used during the first half of the observation period. The fact that two fewer big books were used during the second half was not regarded as being significant.

Nine of the big books were familiar to the students and familiarity/unfamiliarity was not considered to be a factor in the selection of big books by the teacher.

On three occasions, a big book experience extended beyond a single day. With Five Little Pumpkins, the big book experience was extended over three days, October 23, 24 and November 7. Two of these extended occasions occurred within the first two days of the study which again suggests a tailing off of the phenomenon over time. However, there probably were other instances when the researcher was not present when big book experiences extended beyond a single, day for on one occasion Mrs. Windsor indicated that she and the children had begun working with This is a Witch the previous day.

> Field notes, October 31: Mrs. Windsor told me that yesterday the class did a build up book (This is a Witch). Essentially, the teacher gave the students a picture (a witch) and the first sentence (This is a witch.) and then elicited from the students sentences which further described the witch.

Twelve of the 18 big book experiences included related activities. The most common pattern (8 of 18) was for the teacher to read the big book with the children first and then follow it with an activity (Eg. On Sunday, October 24). The next most common pattern (4 of 18) was for the

Table 4.7
Overview Of Big Book Experiences

	October					November							
	16	17	23	24	30	31	6	7	13	14	21	27	28
Whose Mouse Are You? (U)	BR	RB											
	B												
What I Know About Witches (F)	RB	R											
There's A Mouse About The House(U)		RBR											
This Is A Witch (F)					B								
					B								
Five Little Pumpkins (F)			BRs	BR				B					
			B										
I Am A Monster (F)				BR									
				B									
Follow the Monsters (U)				sr									
On Sunday (U)					BR:								
					s								
Teeny Tiny Woman (U)					BR								
Lamont The Lonely Monster (U)						sr							
Brown Bear, Brown Bear (F)						s							
Black Cat, Black Cat (U)						Bs							
Slugs (U)							sr						
I Can Do Anything Almost (U)							sr						
Hopscotch-Basal (U)							s						
What Can You Do? (F)							RB						
Nursery Rhymes (F)							rs					s	s
Someday I'll Go Shopping (U)								BR					
								sr					
Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater (F)								BR					
The Farmer and The Skunk (U)									BR				
									s				
Humpty Dumpty (F)									s	BR			
										sr			
Noisy Nora (U)											RBR		
											s		
At My House I Saw (U)											B		
Christmas Recitation (F)												B	
A House Is A House For Me (U)												sr	sr
Peterkin Meets A Star (U)													sr
													B
Snowflakes Are Softly Falling (F)													B
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star (F)													B

Key: B-Big Book R-Big Book (Related Activity) s-Small Book r-Small Book (Related Activity)
U-Unfamiliar F-Familiar

teacher to read the big book with the children without a follow-up. On one occasion, (What Can You do?, October 31), the teacher had the children engage in an activity prior to reading the big book with them.

When the big book experience extended beyond a single day, a variety of patterns emerged. For example, with Whose Mouse are You? (October 16 and 17), the big book was read first, was followed by two activities, and the big book was read again. With This is the Way the Witches Fly (October 16 and 17), an activity was completed first, the big book was then read, and another activity followed.

A related activity was used on at least one occasion during each day observed. Time, genre and familiarity/unfamiliarity of the text did not seem to influence whether or not related activities were used.

Mrs. Windsor utilized ten small books, six of them in the first half of the observation period. Seven of the small books used were unfamiliar which suggests unfamiliarity may have been a criterion for selecting small books. This contrasts with the big books which were almost evenly split between familiar - unfamiliar. Two of the small book experiences extended beyond a single day, A House Is a House for Me on November 27 and 28 and Nursery Rhymes on October 31 and November 21 and 27. Interestingly, the use of small books over several periods occurred in the second half of the observation period and is the opposite of what occurred with big books.

Eight of the ten small book experiences included related activities. As with big book experiences, the most common pattern here (5 of 10) was for the teacher to read the book with the children and then follow it with an activity (Eg. Follow the Monsters, October 24). Two of the small books were not accompanied by related activities (eg. Brown Bear, Brown Bear, October 31). With There's a Mouse About the House (October 17), an

activity preceded the reading of the book which in turn was followed by another activity.

As was the case with big books, time, genre, and familiarity/unfamiliarity did not seem to influence whether or not related activities were part of a small book experience.

PARTICIPANTS AND THE BIG BOOK EXPERIENCE

Control

Degree of Teacher Control Through Allocation of Talk Time

Of the total number of interactions (10,669), 413 involved shared teacher/child talk. The number and percent of interactions by teacher and children alone are shown in Table 4.8. Teacher talk was dominant in all three contexts. The proportion of teacher talk (62%) in related activities

Table 4.8

Allocation of Talk Time

	Teacher	Children	Total
Big books	2003(55%)	1638(45%)	3641
Small books	1253(62%)	775(38%)	2028
Related Activities	2862(62%)	1725(38%)	4587
Total	6118(60%)	4138(40%)	10 256

was the same as for small books (62%). However, teacher talk was proportionally less in big books (55%) than in small books (62%). The ratio of teacher talk within related activities was similar here (62%) to the ratio of teacher talk in related activities in Mrs. Anthony's class(67%). Interestingly though, the ratio of teacher talk in big books was less here (55%) than in Mrs. Anthony's class (63%). Also, the ratio of overall teacher talk is less in Mrs. Windsor's class than in Mrs. Anthony's class.

Control Through Relational Meaning

Within big books, disciplinary and organizational type interactions

accounted for 85% of the total interactions (See Table 4.9). Both of these types of interactions emanated from the teacher.

Table 4.9

Relational Meanings of Interactions within Big Books

	Discipline	Routines	Child Initiates	Requests	Total
Whose Mouse Are You?(U)	18	45	9	1	
What I Know About Witches(F)	15	21	18	2	
Five Little Pumpkins(F)	8	22	1		
I Am A Monster(F)	15	15	5	3	
This Is A Witch(F)	2	1	1		
Teeny Tiny Woman(U)	13	14	4		
On Sunday(U)	17	27	6	2	
Black Cat, Black Cat(U)	8	1	1		
What Can You Do?(F)	20	6		1	
Someday I'll Go Shopping(U)	15	6			
Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater(F)	11	42			
The Farmer and The Skunk(U)	4	5		2	
Noisy Nora(U)	18	11	3	15	
At MY House I Saw(U)	22	10	4	5	
Christmas Recitation(F)	14	13			
Snowflakes Are Softly Falling(F)	20	12	3		
Total	250(43%)	251(43%)	55(9%)	31(5%)	587

No trends were found across time, between familiar/unfamiliar texts or across genre for interactions of a disciplinary or an organizational nature.

Children's attempts to initiate reading however declined from 45 instances in the first half of the period of observation to 10 instances in the last half of the period of observation. The researcher speculates that this was due to Mrs. Windsor's insistence with some big books on reading each page herself first before allowing the children to read. The following excerpt from the transcript of the reading of Whose Mouse are You? exemplifies this.

> Mrs. Windsor reads the next page. A child or several children read along with her.
> "Where is your sister?"
> A child: "In the mouse"

A child begins to read the line FAR FROM HOME
"Far"
Mrs. Windsor: "My turn boys and girls. You'll get your turn later."

Because children were generally discouraged from initiating reading within the big books, the researcher speculates that they began to see the reading of big books as being a highly teacher controlled experience and they subsequently learned not to attempt to initiate reading as the semester progressed. Familiarity/unfamiliarity and text genre did not seem to be factors in children's attempts to initiate reading. No trends were seen across time, between familiar/unfamiliar texts, or across genre for children's requests.

Within small books, disciplinary and organizational interactions were again dominant (85%) (See Table 4.10). The incidence of disciplinary type interactions increased over time from 28 instances in the first half to 76 instances in the second half. No trends for the other type of interactions were seen.

Table 4.10

Relational Meanings of Interactions Within Small Books

	Discipline	Routines	Child Initiates	Requests	Total
There's A Mouse About The House(U)	9	11	4	3	
Follow the Monsters(U)		3			
Lamont The Lonely Monster(U)	10	10	5		
Brown Bear, Brown Bear(F)		3			
Slugs(U)	5	7		1	
I Can Do Anything Almost(U)	2	3			
Hopscotch Basal(U)	2	6	3	1	
Nursery Rhymes(F)	27	23	3	2	
Humpty Dumpty(F)					
A House Is A House For Me(U)	35	12	3	1	
Peterkin Meets A Star(U)	14	13	5	4	
Total	104(45%)	91(40%)	23 (10%)	12(5%)	230

The high proportion of disciplinary and organizational interactions that occurred in the reading of big books and small books was also evident

in related activities (85%) (See Table 4.11). Over time, children's attempts

Table 4.11

Relational Meanings of Interactions Within Related Activities

	Discipline	Routines	Child Initiates	Requests	Total
Whose Mouse Are You?(U)	20	21	9		
There's A Mouse About The House (U)	5	4			
What I Know About Witches (F)	9	4			
Five Little Pumpkins (F)	23	56	2	3	
I Am A Monster (F)	13	19	3		
On Sunday (U)	3	9	2		
Teeny Tiny Woman (U)	9	26	3	1	
Lamont The Lonely Monster (U)	4	4	1		
Black Cat, Black Cat (U)	14	7	3	1	
Slugs (U)	9	4			
I Can Do Anything Almost (U)	9	6	2	1	
Nursery Rhymes (F)	9	28	7		
Someday I'll Go Shopping (U)	12	19	4	3	
The Farmer and The Skunk (U)	22	23	2	2	
Humpty Dumpty (F)	20	25	12	2	
Noisy Nora (U)	6	7	1		
A House Is A House For Me (U)	18	26	21	1	
Peterkin Meets A Star (U)	1	9	2		
Total	206(35%)	297(50%)	74(13%)	4 (2%)	591

at initiating during related activities increased from 25 to 49. This is the opposite of what occurred with big books. The researcher conjectures that this was the result of the related activities being less constrained than the big books with more of a give and take atmosphere being allowed. This, combined with the children's growing confidence in their own competencies over time, probably accounts for this increase over time in this particular context. This was the only trend seen.

Control Through Selection of Children

Teacher selection of high or low achieving children for participation within big books is shown in Table 4.12. During the first half of the observation period, Mrs. Windsor tended to select low achieving children more frequently (60%) than high achieving children (40%). During the

Table 4.12

Selection of Children Within Big Books

	High Achieving	Low Achieving	Total
Whose Mouse Are You? (U)	11	8	
What I Know About Witches (F)	7	12	
Five Little Pumpkins (F)	3	2	
I Am A Monster (F)	12	26	
This Is A Witch (F)	4	4	
Teeny Tiny Woman (U)	3	7	
On Sunday (U)	3	5	
Black Cat, Black Cat (U)			
What Can You Do?(F)	1		
Someday I'll Go Shopping(U)	2		
Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater (F)	8	3	
The Farmer and The Skunk (U)	2	4	
Noisy Nora (U)	4	4	
At MY House I Saw (U)	4	8	
Christmas Recitation (F)			
Snowflakes Are Softly Falling (F)	8	11	
Total	72 (44%)	93 (56%)	165

second half however, the children were selected equally. This might be attributable to Mrs. Windsor's growing knowledge of the children as the term progressed with a parallel desire on her part to equalize opportunity for participation and thus a tendency to select more equally both high achieving and low achieving children. This conjecture is also supported by the same trend in the other two contexts.

Within small books (Table 4.13), no other patterns emerged.

Table 4.13

Selection of Children Within Small Books

	High Achieving	Low Achieving	Total
There's A Mouse About The House (U)	5	17	
Follow the Monsters (U)			
Lamont The Lonely Monster (U)	11	11	
Brown Bear, Brown Bear (F)			
Slugs (U)	3	4	
I Can Do Anything Almost (U)			
Hopscotch Basal (U)		3	
Nursery Rhymes (F)	13	11	
A House Is A House For Me (U)	15	15	
Peterkin Meets A Star (U)	11	2	
Total	58(48%)	63(52%)	121

However, in related activities (Table 4.14), low achieving children were

Table 4.14
Selection Of Children - Related Activities

	High Achieving	Low Achieving	Total
Whose Mouse Are You?(U)	20	33	
There's A Mouse About The House (U)	4	7	
What I Know About Witches (F)	2	4	
Five Little Pumpkins (F)	24	26	
I Am A Monster (F)	12	5	
On Sunday (U)	3	6	
Teeny Tiny Woman (U)	1	2	
Lamont The Lonely Monster (U)	3	4	
Black Cat, Black Cat (U)	5	3	
Slugs (U)		2	
I Can Do Anything Almost (U)	7	18	
Nursery Rhymes (F)	10	7	
Someday I'll Go Shopping (U)	15	17	
The Farmer and The Skunk	10	14	
Humpty Dumpty (F)	23	23	
Noisy Nora (U)	12	8	
A House Is A House For Me (U)	28	26	
Peterkin Meets A Star (U)	6	11	
Total	185(46%)	216(54%)	401

chosen more frequently than high achieving children when the text around which the activity was built was unfamiliar. When the text was familiar, children were chosen about equally. This was in contrast to the procedure followed by Mrs. Anthony.

Overall, Mrs. Windsor tended to select low achieving children (54%) more frequently than the high achieving children (46%). This is different from the findings from Mrs. Anthony's class and also from the findings of researchers such as Johnson and Winograd (1983).

SUMMARY

Both communities and schools were similar in terms of the make-up of the student population and the facilities available. Both teachers considered themselves to be whole language teachers. While both teachers utilized big books, small books and related activities during the big book experiences, Mrs. Windsor used many more small books than did Mrs.

Anthony. Both teachers agreed on the overall purpose of big books as that of "teaching". While the manner in which the big book experiences were organized was similar across classrooms, there were some differences with regard to the amount of talk time dominated by the teacher and the involvement of high and low achieving children in sharing the big book experiences.

CHAPTER V

MRS. ANTHONY'S CLASS

While the context in which big books were shared was presented in Chapter IV, this chapter focuses on the heart of the matter - the nature of reader participation and the specific interactions through which teacher and children allowed the sharing of big books to evolve. The data for Mrs. Anthony's class are presented and participation and interactions are discussed for big books and related activities.

As the various interactions are introduced, definitions, and where necessary, examples are provided. To provide a flavor for the overall prominence of the various interactions within big book experiences, the percentages of the total interactions (teacher and children) within each category were computed. To highlight potential differences between interactions, percentages were then calculated separately for the teacher and children, with regard to time,text genre, and familiarity/unfamiliarity of the books. Because Mrs. Anthony did not share small books to any extent (only one such session was observed), there is no further analysis in terms of interactions which occurred in small books.

READER PARTICIPATION

The sharing of big books necessitated that the teacher and students adopt different roles. Four patterns of reader participation were evident from the data. They were: (1) the teacher read a text or a portion of a text alone; (2) the teacher and children read a text or part of a text together (cooperatively); (3) the children as a group read on their own; and (4) a single child read alone.

Sharing Big Books

The most prominent form of reader participation was for the teacher and children to read cooperatively. (See Table 5.1) The

Table 5.1
Reader Participation

	Teacher	Teacher & Children	Children	Child	Total
Big Books	129 14%	442 48%	219 24%	125 14%	915 100%
Related Activities	104 35%	89 30%	74 25%	32 10%	299 100%

children were usually directed to participate in the reading by the teacher (Eg. "Let's read this together. " "Let's read it again."). Nearly 25% of the interaction time was spent by the children reading on their own. Quite frequently, these two forms of reader participation were used conjointly within the same text. That is, the teacher and children read part of a text together, the teacher would "back out" as it were and the children would continue to read alone, and the teacher would then join in the reading again.

Eg. October 22, Five Little Pumpkins

Teacher and children read together:
"The fifth one said"
Teacher stops reading, children continue:
"I'm ready for some fun
O o o o went the wind"
Teacher reads along with the children:
"and out went the lights
and the five little pumpkins"
Teacher stops reading, children continue:
"rolled out of sight."

Mrs. Anthony appeared to have two purposes for using this particular strategy. As in the case of Five Little Pumpkins, she would read along with the children in what appeared to be a supportive capacity, helping the children maintain the reading, and then allowing the children to continue the reading on their own. This strategy appeared to be very similar to that used by parents which Doake (1981) called "cooperative reading" (p. 447).

At other times, the teacher withdrew from the reading and let the

children read alone, apparently in order to to give them an opportunity for independent reading and to monitor the children's reading.

Eg. November 19, One Elephant, Two Elephants

Teacher and children read:
"Three elephants went"
Teacher stops reading, children continue:
"out to play
Upon a spider's web one day.
They had such enormous fun
That they called for another elephant to come."
Children continue alone:
"Four elephants went out to play
Upon a spider's web one day.
They had such enormous fun
That they called for another elephant to come."
Children continue alone:
"Five elephants went out to play
Upon a spider's web one day
They had such enormous fun"
Some children: "But there were"
Other children: "That they called"
TEXT: BUT THERE WERE
Teacher interjects and corrects miscues:
"But there were"

In some instances when the teacher and students read cooperatively, she was unable to monitor their reading because she did not always hear pupils who miscued.

Eg. October 15, The Teeny Tiny Woman

Teacher points and reads, children read with her:	One child reads:
"One sunny day the teeny tiny woman went for a teeny tiny walk with her teeny tiny dog."	"One sunny day the teeny tiny woman went for a walk with her teeny tiny dog."

The writer speculates that Mrs. Anthony, either consciously or unconsciuosly, realized that she could monitor the children's reading more effectively when she was not reading with them and therefore withdrew from the reading to do this. This is not to suggest that these two strategies were employed separately, for as in the example of One Elephant,Two Elephants , both strategies appear to be used simultaneously.

On one occasion (November 19, Five Little Frogs), the teacher and children read a whole text together but this was a much less common practice. These seemed to be instances of what Mrs. Anthony called "reading for fun" and which researchers have found to be so much a part of parent-child reading in the home. (Doake, 1981; Holdaway, 1979).

The amount of time spent by the teacher reading alone or by a child reading alone was approximately equal. A child sometimes read alone at the request of the teacher. Such situations tended to occur when big books, which were written cooperatively by the teacher and students, were being read.

Eg. October 21, Hallowe'en Stories

Teacher: "Wade"
Wade comes forward. He points to each word as he reads:
"I thought I saw a ghost but it was only a rainbow."

On other occasions, but less frequently, a child read a portion of a text in advance of the other readers.

Eg. November 4, The Bus Ride

Teacher and children read:
"Then the bus "
Children complete:
" went fast."
A child reads :
" A hippopotamus got on the bus."
Teacher and children read:
"A hippopotamus got on the bus."

This also appears to be an example of cooperative reading as defined by Doake. A child read alone more frequently when the text was familiar. If a book had been cooperatively written, the teacher knew that the children already knew the text and thus felt free to call on particular children. Children who "read ahead" were familiar with the text or certainly familiar with the words.

Mrs. Anthony tended to read alone when the text was unfamiliar.

This relates to Feuerstein and Hoffman's (1984) notion of mediating for competency in that she did not request that children engage in reading a text with which they were not familiar and which probably was beyond their competency. Doake (1981) and Hayden (1985) found similar tendencies on the part of parents reading to their children in the home. The teacher also read alone when she wanted to model a particular intonation pattern or cadence.

Eg. October 22, Five Little Pumpkins

Children read:
"The second one said
Oh my it's getting late."
Teacher reads:
" The second one said,
Oh my it's getting late."
Teacher: "Try again."

Sometimes with familiar texts, the teacher began reading alone and the children subsequently joined in the reading. She seemed to do this as a cue to get the children reading synchronously.

Across genre, the teacher and children reading together was the most common form of reader participation. However, the teacher read alone in narrative more frequently than in the other genre, probably because most of the narratives were unfamiliar. There was very little variation in child participation over time.

Related Reading Activities

The predominant form of reader participation in related activities was the teacher reading alone. One type of activity used by Mrs. Anthony was a form of extension of the big book wherein she solicited from the children examples of a concept which was encountered in the big book. For example after reading Things I Ride, the teacher solicited from the children examples of things which they could ride other than those mentioned in the book. After a number of solicitations which she printed

on a language experience chart, she reviewed them by "reading" the list of objects.

Mrs. Anthony reads:
"truck. stallion. horse. zebra. camel."

Mrs. Anthony quite frequently read alone like this in what appeared to be a reviewing capacity of what had happened during the question-answer session.

In another type of related activity, the children were given small photocopied versions of a big book which had been read and from which words had been deleted. (Eg. The skunk _____ _____ the porch.) Simultaneously, the same version of the text was projected from the overhead projector. The usual scenario was for the teacher to read as far as a missing word and then to pause as a cue for children to predict what word came next. When the correct word was provided, the teacher printed it in the appropriate blank space on the overhead. Likewise the children printed the word in their versions of the text.

Eg. November 12, Related Activity, The Farmer and the Skunk

Teacher reads : "The skunk sat under the porch." Teacher: "The farmer did what?"	TEXT: THE SKUNK SAT UNDER THE PORCH. OVERHEAD : THE FARMER _____ _____ _____.
Teacher rereads: "The skunk sat under the porch."	TEXT : THE SKUNK SAT UNDER THE PORCH.
Teacher reads: "The farmer" (pauses)	OVERHEAD : THE FARMER _____ _____ _____.
Children predict missing words: "sat on the porch." Teacher reads as she prints each word in the blank spaces: "sat . . . on . . . the . . . porch."	

It seems then, that the form of related activites used, accounted at least

in part for the amount of time spent by the teacher reading alone.

Children's participation in reading in activities related to unfamiliar books was greater than in activities related to familiar books (72% versus 28%). This appears to relate to Mrs. Anthony's concern with children learning the words in big books which was mentioned in Chapter IV. That is, she engaged children in activities such as reading words taken from unfamiliar texts with the apparent intention of having children remember the words. With familiar texts, this concern did not seem to be as prominent and there was no such follow-up.

Children's participation in reading was greatest in activities related to texts which were patterned language where there was almost equal involvement by the teacher alone, the teacher and children reading together and the children reading alone. Over time, the amount of time spent by the teacher reading alone and that by the children reading alone decreased in the second half of the observation period while the amount of time spent by the children and teacher reading together and a child reading alone increased in the second half.

NATURE OF CHILDREN'S READING

Doake (1981) found that in shared reading experiences in the home, children could choose between "silent participation" and "overt participation" (pp. 414-421). He identified various techniques through which children overtly participated in the reading, namely mumble reading, echo reading and completion reading. He described mumble reading as instances where a child

> would approximate the words being read in an indecipherable mumble. This was usually started fractionally after the reader had commenced saying the words (p. 426).

Echo reading was described as occurring when children "repeated something that had been read to them immediately after they had heard it"

(p. 438). Doake defined completion reading as occurring "whenever the reader paused at a point in the story and appropriate words were able to be given by the children to complete the phrase or sentence" (p. 428). Mumble and echo reading were combined for analysis in this study as they were often indistinguishable and both seemed to have a similar function of attempting to participate in the reading with the aid of the teacher.

Evidence of these various forms of reader participation was present in Mrs. Anthony's class. However there was a significant difference in the overt reading participation in Mrs. Anthony's class and in the shared reading described by Doake. As he implied quite strongly, although parents encouraged the children to overtly participate in the reading, the children choose to participate or not to participate of their own volition. However, in the classroom, such choice was often not given to the children and at times they were all expected to participate. The teacher communicated this expectation to the children through statements such as "Let's read together" or "Let's read this again".

Sharing Big Books

As is illustrated in Table 5.2, completion reading was the most prominent of these forms of reading in Mrs. Anthony's class. This is

Table 5.2
Nature of Children's Reading

	Mumble/Echo Reading	Completion	Total
Big Books	35 22%	127 78%	162 100%
Related Activites	10 29%	24 71%	34 100%

consistent with Doake's findings of shared reading experiences in the home. The following is an example from I Like This Book (November 4).

Teacher reads:
"Fingers can catch a dog.
One, two, three, four.
Can you tell me more.
Fingers can catch a - "
Children complete: "frog."

Echo/mumble reading made up about one-fifth of the children's reading participation.

While instances of completion reading increased from 70% in the first part of the term to 82% in the second part, instances of echo/mumble reading decreased from 30% to 18%. Even very early in the year, children were generally very successful in providing the expected responses in completion reading. This positive feedback to the teacher, coupled with the increasing competency of the children as readers, were probable factors contributing to the increased use of this technique. The decrease in echo/mumble reading and the concurrent increase in completion reading over the course of the study conceivably could be related in that as children were given increasing opportunity to participate through completion reading,there was less need to access participation through echo/mumble reading.

Completion reading was more prominent in unfamiliar books (84%) than in familiar books (69%) while echo/mumble reading was more prominent in familiar books (31%) than in unfamiliar books (16%). The prominence of echo/mumble reading in familiar books is consistent with Doake (1981), although he implied that it rarely occurred in unfamiliar books. He reported that

> When new stories were being read, the children seldom attempted to participate actively in the reading other than by occasionally pointing to the pictures or asking questions (p.419).

One might expect that children would engage in echo/mumble reading more frequently when the text was familiar. Similarly, one would

expect the teacher to prompt completion reading more frequently when the text was familiar since there would be a greater chance of the children being able to complete the task. There are three possible explanations as to why these findings differ from those of Doake. Most of the books Mrs. Anthony used, including those with narrative structure, had highly patterned, and hence very predictable language, as the following excerpt from Teeny Tiny Woman, a narrative text, demonstrates.

> There was once a teeny, tiny woman who lived in a teeny tiny house with a teeny, tiny dog and a teeny tiny cat.
> One sunny day, the teeny tiny woman went for a teeny, tiny walk with her teeny, tiny dog and her teeny, tiny cat.

Such language it would seem, is so repetitive, and so patterned that children could become familiar enough with it as the teacher moved through it for the first time that they could engage in echo/mumble reading as the story progressed. A second explanation is that the children in this study were older than the children in Doake's study. It is quite conceivable that at least some of the children in Mrs. Anthony's class had been read to at home and had engaged in these types of reading at home. This combined with the increased maturity of the children would seem to have given them the competencies needed to engage in echo/mumble reading and completion reading, even when the text was unfamilair. Still another possible explanation is that while the books were deemed unfamiliar if most of the children had not encountered them previously, it was possible that books designated unfamiliar by the teacher were familair to individual children and it was they who engaged in completion reading and echo/mumble reading.

Related Reading Activites

There were fewer instances of echo/mumble reading and completion reading in related activities than in big books. This relates to

the fact that there were fewer occasions in related activities when connected text was read. Over time, engagement in echo/mumble reading remained relatively stable. The amount of completion reading doubled in the second half, a similar trend as found in big books and likely attributable to the same factors. Both echo/mumble reading and completion reading were evenly distributed in familiar and unfamiliar books. As with big books, instances of these behaviours were distributed across genre.

INTERACTIVE BEHAVIOUR - QUESTIONING

The questioning strategies employed in adult-child dialogue both within story reading events and outside of story reading events have been a focus of a number of investigators including Hayden and Fagan (1984), Gallagher (1981), Garvey (1977), Hayden (1985), Morris (1985) and Van Kleeck and Gunter (1982). Five functionally different types of questions were identified from the literature which are appropriate to the analysis of the data from this study: clarification questions, confirmation questions, elaboration questions, prediction questions and specification questions.

Clarification questions functioned to get a speaker to reevaluate or rethink an utterance just articulated and seem to signal that the utterance was not applicable or was inappropriate.

> Eg. Mrs. Anthony is soliciting from the children examples of other things on which they could ride.
> Child: "A doll."
> Mrs. Anthony: "You ride on a doll?"

Confirmation questions required a yes-no response in that the teacher wished to confirm or disconfirm whether another speaker was in agreement with a particular statement or whether a previous statement had been interpreted correctly.

Eg. Mrs. Anthony is printing words taken from the story just read on a language experience chart.
Mrs. Anthony : "Do I have - do you have WAGON up?"
Child: "Noooo."

Elaboration questions signalled that the speaker wanted a previous speaker to expand upon the utterance or that the speaker wanted someone to expand on some aspect of text or a concept.

Eg. A child predicted that the witch in the story being discussed would need a flying broom.
Mrs. Anthony: "Why do you think she's going to need a flying broom, Elaine?"

Prediction questions functioned to get a speaker to predict what would happen in a particular text or to predict what the next word in a sentence would be.

Eg. Mrs. Anthony, after reading the title New Fangled Witch :
"What do you think is going to happen (in the story)?"
(parenthesis added).

Specification questions served to elicit specific information from a speaker, to induce a participant to identify a specific aspect of text (eg. letter or word), or to induce a participant to identify some aspect of an illustration.

Eg. Teacher (referring to an illustration):
"Sally the cat. Where's Sally the cat?"

Only two percent (17) of the questions asked in Mrs. Anthony's class were generated by the students and will not be analysed in detail.

Sharing Big Books

The distribution of questions is shown in Table 5.3. Almost three quarters of all questions were of two types - specification and prediction. While specification questions comprised almost one-half of the questions asked, almost one quarter of them were accounted for by prediction questions. The high proportion of specification is consistent with Mrs.

Table 5.3
Interactive Behaviours - Questioning

		Prediction	Confirmation	Specification	Elaboration	Clarification	Total
Big Books	(T)	51	12	125	22	24	239
	(C)					5	
		21%	6%	52%	9%	12%	100%
Related Activities	(T)	9	60	279	37	21	412
	(C)			1		5	
		2%	15%	68%	9%	6%	100%

Anthony's focus on text and her concern for memory of words from the big books. As a result, she attempted to have children attend to the specifics of text, which as was suggested in Chapter IV, was an overriding purpose in her sharing of big books

The relatively prominent use of prediction questions is consistent with the degree of completion reading observed. Completion reading, by its nature, is a form of prediction.

There were more specification questions in unfamiliar texts than in familiar texts. This is congruent with Feuerstein and Hoffman's (1984) definition of regulation of behaviour. They believed that within a Mediated Learning Event, it was necessary for the mediator to narrow the learner's focus so that the learner would attend to specific stimulii in order to store the information in memory. Specification questions would aid in helping children focus their attention on the specifics of text.

While elaboration questions did not occur often (9%), there were also more elaboration questions in unfamilair books than in familair books. One would expect this to happen in that elaboration questions required children to go beyond the text by linking the knowledge that they already possessed with the knowledge in the text. Cochran-Smith (1984), in her study of a preschool classroom, also found that the teacher engaged in what she termed "life to text interactions" and which she described as

being "characterized by reader-listener exchanges aimed at helping the children use their knowledge in order to make sense of literature"(p. 193).

No patterns emerged in the use of different types of questions in different genre. There was a disproportionately large number of specification questions in one big book, What Can You See (a patterned language text). The illustrations in this book had various objects semi-concealed in cloud formations and most of the questions pertained to identifying the illustrations. The large number of specification questions was attributed to these idiosyncratic features of this book. Cochran-Smith (1984) also found that patterns of interaction were also situation specific. She elaborated that the teacher did not engage in a "recitation of set reader-questions and listener responses" but instead let the specific context guide the interactions (p. 158).

Sixty percent of the questions asked occurred during the initial half of the study. There were more books used in the first half (16 versus 11) which would account for the increased number of questions asked in this time period.

Related Reading Activities

Specification questions were also most common in related activities and accounted for 68% of the questions asked. The increased use of specification questions in related activities is reflective of the nature of many of the activities (eg. attending to particular words and getting the children to associate particular sounds and letters).

Prediction questions were asked much less frequently in related activities than in the sharing of big books (2% versus 21%). Relatively few related activities centered on connected text and this limited the opportunities for asking children to predict events and/or words. Prediction within related activities generally occurred at the grapheme

level.

OTHER INTERACTIVE BEHAVIOURS

While questioning is a common form of interaction used by teachers in sharing a reading experience (Morris,1985), other interactive behaviours are also used to further the development of a reading activity. Based on other research and from the analysis of the data, the following additional behaviors were observed in Mrs. Anthony's classroom.

Prediction

Prediction usually resulted from the prediction questions asked by the teacher, or children would predict an upcoming event in a text or predict an upcoming word.

Eg November 19, I Know An Old Lady

Teacher and children read :
"I don't know how
she swallowed a cow "
A child:"Next is horse"
Teacher and children read:
" She swallowed the cow
to catch the goat"

Transcendence

Transcendence, which was identified by Feuerstein et al. (1980) as a requisite component of a Mediated Learning Experience involves going beyond "the here and now" to cognitively link a stimulus which is present to a familiar stimulus which is not present spatially or temporally.

Eg. October 15, In a Dark, Dark Wood

Teacher, pointing to illustration of a chest:
"It's kind of like a drawer, a cabinet
that you have, a bureau in your room."

Children also engaged in transcendence on their own.

Eg. November 12, I Like This Book

Teacher and children are discussing various signs
(eg. stop sign, yield sign, etc.) that are in the

illustration. A child suggests he knows another kind of sign.
Child: "People like, when they have a man and a gun and they cross it out and it means you can't hunt there."

Elaboration

Elaboration by the children usually occurred in answer to an elaboration question generated by the teacher. However, the teacher also elaborated on a specific item or concept.

Eg. November 12, The Farmer and the Skunk

Teacher (elaborating on the suggestion from a child that if you were sprayed by a skunk, you would have to take a bath in tomato juice):
"If you get sprayed by a skunk you have to take a bath in tomato juice because tomato juice helps the smell go away."

Occasionally, children also elaborated without being prompted by a question.

Eg. November 12, The Farmer and the Skunk

A child (elaborating on the idea of taking a bath in tomato juice):
"And then you'd smell like tomato juice."

Clarification

Clarification often occurred in response to a clarification question from the teacher. The teacher also clarified misinterpretations or misconceptions about a particular concept.

Eg. November 19, One Pig, Two Pigs

Teacher (clarifying confusion as to alphabetizing words) :
"Like fence would be the next one because it starts with f."

Prompting/Cueing

Prompting or cueing was frequently provided by the teacher when the children reading together or a child reading alone encountered

difficulty.

Eg. October 21, I Thought I Saw

Child reads:
"I thought I saw a ghost"
Teacher turns page.
Child reads:
"But it was only water ..."
Child hesitates.
Teacher: "running"
Child reads:
"running through the grass."

Children also prompted each other when a child who was reading alone encountered difficulty.

Eg. October 21, I Thought I Saw

Child : "I thought I saw a ghost but it
was only uh ... "
Some other children whisper: "mud"
Child reads: "mud."

Mediation for Competency

The teacher sometimes engaged in "mediation for competency" (Feuerstein and Hoffman, 1984) by overtly making the children aware of their abilities.

Eg. October 15, In a Dark, Dark Wood

Teacher: "Okay, let's say 'boo' at the end. Are you ready?
If someone was hearing us from outside. This
is a really scary story. You know all the words."

Directions Related to Reading

Directions related to reading were very specific statements which were signals to the children to attend to text or to engage in reading. These were also seen as examples of regulation of behaviour (Feuerstein and Hoffman, 1984).

Eg. October 15, In a Dark, Dark Wood

Teacher : "Let's read this again. In a scared voice."

Confirmation

Confirmation was used in several different ways. The teacher often confirmed that an answer to a question she had posed was acceptable to her or confirmed that a text had been read satisfactorily. A typical means of confirmation was to repeat the answer which had been provided or by repeating the last few words of a text read.

Eg. November 4, I Like This Book

A child (in answer to the question "What can fingers do?") : "Write with them."
Teacher : "Write with them."

Children sometimes confirmed that an answer to a question was acceptable. In addition of course, confirmation resulted from confirmation questions posed by the teacher.

Non-confirmation

Non-confirmation was used in functionally similar ways as confirmation except that instead of indicating acceptability or agreement, it indicated unacceptability or disagreement. Like confirmation, both children and teacher used non-confirmation.

Establishment of Meaning Prior to Reading

In some instances the teacher engaged in interactions which functioned to establish meaning prior to reading and to help children instantiate an appropriate schema for the text to be read.

Eg. November 12, The Farmer and the Skunk

Teacher (prior to reading the text, explaining why skunks sometimes spray their victims) : "Because you're near, they're getting attacked. They'll sometimes spray you because they're frightened. That's how they protect themselves."

Specification

The majority of the instances of specification came from the

children in answer to specification questions asked by the teacher. In addition, the teacher sometimes called attention to specific words or portions of the text through specification.

Eg. October 28, Hallowe'en Stories
Teacher: "Remember, Suzy Witch, this is John and Julie."

Sharing Big Books

Acceptance/confirmation, prediction, directions related to reading, and specification accounted for approximately 75% of the interactions in this category. (See Table 5.4) The other interactions all occurred very infrequently.

Table 5.4

Interactive Behaviours - Others

	Prediction	Transcendence	Elaboration	Clarification	Prompting/Cueing	Competency	Directions	Acceptance	Non-acceptance	Establishing Meaning	Specification	Total
Big Books		17	28	37	13	8	106	262	35	10	19	880
	143	6	34	12	1			56	13		80	
	16%	3%	7%	5.5%	2%	1%	12%	36%	5.5%	1%	11%	100%
Related Activites		10	35	36	12	7	156	449	35		43	1495
	57	17	55	21	24			137	52		349	
	4%	2%	6%	4%	2%	1%	10%	39%	6%		26%	100%

Confirmation/acceptance was the most frequently used of these interactions (36% of the total). In addition to being used as a feedback device to indicate acceptance of an answer or approval of oral reading, it also seems to function as a feedback mechanism in what Bloome (1986) termed "procedural display" (p.73). He suggested that "as teacher

and students interact, they build on each other's behaviours, displaying appropriate procedures that count as getting the lesson done" (p.73). That is, as the teacher's intentions were fulfilled through appropriate behaviour (responses) on the part of the children, the teacher indicated this through acceptance/confirmation. The children also engaged in acceptance/confirmation, but less frequently than the teacher.

Mrs. Anthony's use of acceptance/confirmation declined by nearly 50 percent in the second half of the observation period as compared to the first half. Some of this decline can be attributed to the decline in the number of big books used and the number of questions asked. The writer speculates that the decline also relates to Bloome's notion of procedural display in that as the term progressed and the children learned to display what was expected of them, and acted more routinely, there was less need for the teacher to engage in acceptance/confirmation in order to maintain the lesson in the direction in which she wanted it to go. This speculation is consistent with the decline in non-acceptance/non-confirmation on the part of the teacher over time.

Prediction (16%) was the second most prominent non-question type interaction. It occurred with approximately equal frequency in familiar and unfamiliar books. Doake (1981) and Hayden (1985) found that in parent-child reading in the home, children engaged in prediction more frequently in familiar books. However, within this study, this finding is not inconsistent in that the children engaged in completion reading (prediction) more frequently in unfamiliar books which may have been influenced by the fact that Mrs. Anthony asked as many prediction questions in unfamiliar as in familiar books.

There was proportionately less prediction in verse than in narrative or patterned books. This no doubt resulted from Mrs. Anthony's inclination

to read the whole verse without interruption.

Directions related to reading was the third most commonly observed interaction (12%). Browne (1971), in her study of first and third grade classrooms, found "that a substantial proportion of the interaction involves teachers issuing directions" (p.124). Bloome (1981) also found that teachers tended to engage in a high proportion of this type of interaction in reading lessons (p.14).

Directions related to reading declined from 24% in the first half of the observation period to 12% in the second half. This was seen as resulting from the children's increased familiarity with the procedures the teacher expected and less need for the teacher to verbally indicate what she wished children to do.

Nearly one third of the instances of directions related to reading occurred in a particular book - In A Dark, Dark Wood. This was the first text used by the teacher during the observation period. It was reread several times including once when the boys and girls took turns reading consecutive lines with the teacher directing the turn taking. This was one of the few books used over two separate days. It may be that being early in the semester, the teacher was still initiating the children into the procedures for sharing big books. It is also possible that the teacher, being aware of the researcher's presence was making an extra effort to involve the students. The use of this book, on several occasions, no doubt also added to the increase in this kind of interaction.

The fourth prominent type of interaction was specification. This reflects the prominence of specification questions in this context, although the percentage of specification responses was much less than the percent of specification questions, thus pointing out that other kinds of responses (interactions) also followed specification questions. Just as

specification questions were more frequent in unfamiliar books, so too was the provision of specific information.

Related Reading Activities

Acceptance/confirmation, specification, and directions related to reading accounted for 75% of the interactions in related activities. As in the case of big books, acceptance/confirmation (39%) was the most prominent. In related activities, considerable time was devoted to assessment/development of children's knowledge of the specifics of text and content. Because acceptance/confirmation was used as feedback to let children know they were on the right track, there was a greater need for this interaction than in big books where more time was spent sharing the reading.

Specification (26%) was the second most prominent type of interaction. It was also more prominent than in big books (11%). This was expected given the increased use of specification questions and the emphasis on smaller units (words and letters) of text in these activities.

Directions related to reading were used only slightly more frequently in related activities (12%) than in big books (10%). No trends over time, between familiar/unfamilar texts or across genre were observed.

ATTENTION TO INPUT

The text is a very significant component of the reading act. Teachers may enhance the visibility of text by having the children focus on or attend to various aspects of the text. On the basis of observations from the study, the following aspects of text, to which attention was drawn, were noted. Semantics was not considered a separate factor since (a) the interactions discussed in relation to Tables 5.3 and 5.4 focused on semantics and (b) factors such as words do have a semantic overtone. The

goal here was to focus on print and print sequences to which attention was drawn.

Letters and Words

Doake (1981) and Hayden (1985) both found that parents frequently pointed to the print as they read to their children. Holdaway (1979) posited that:

> Two vital insights are driven home by pointing: the insight that there is a one to one relationship between spoken and written words; and the insight that print moves from left to right, along the line, back and down (pp. 75-76).

He cited evidence from Clay (1979) suggesting "that pointing is a crucial strategy during the early reading stage" (p.75).

As the teacher and/or the children read big books, she almost invariably pointed to the print. On occasion, the teacher also focused on specific words by pointing to or commenting on them.

> Eg. October 23, Five Little Pumpkins
>
> Teacher : "This is called
> Here the teacher points to each word. She reads and children read along with her :
> "Five ... little ... pumpkins"

Less frequently, but on occasion, the children focused on print in a similiar manner.

Graphophonic Information

Goodman (1973) suggested that one of the sources of information a reader accesses is "graphophonic information" which he described as the relationship between "the graphic and phonological systems" (p. 26).

In this study attention to graphophonic information meant that the teacher or the children focused on sound-symbol relationships through either commenting on or attending to the sound value of a particular grapheme, the spelling of a particular word, or a particular mnemonic

device which seemed to be aimed at helping children remember the sound of a word.

Eg. October 16, What I Know About Witches

Teacher and children are cooperatively writing the text. A child has just produced the sentence "Witches eat worms" and the teacher is scribing it.
Teacher as she prints : "Oh, /w/, /w/, witches"
A child : "I hate that one."
Teacher, as she prints : "eats ... /w/, /w/, ... what does worms start with?"
Child: "w"
Teacher : "w ... worms."

Illustrations

The supportive role that illustrations play in children's reading development has been documented by Cochran-Smith (1984), Doake (1981), Holdaway (1979) and Huck (1979). They saw illustrations as an important cue which children accessed in their attempts to reconstruct the meaning of text through what Doake and Holdaway termed "reading-like behaviour". Cochran-Smith argued that illustrations play an integral role "of the beginning reading/comprehending process" (p.11). In a similar vein, Huck argued that the messages in picture books are conveyed through two media, "the art of illustrating, and the art of writing" (p. 113).

Attention to illustrations meant that the teacher or the children, separately or cooperatively, referred to, commented on, or discussed an illustration.

Eg. November 28, Peterkin Meets a Star

The teacher is reading the text. A child points to an illustration and says :
"Look at the stars in the sky."

Correction of Miscues

Recent researchers and theorists such as Brailsford (1985), Clay (1979), Doake (1981), Donaldson (1978), Holdaway (1979), and Meek (1982)

have described emergent reading behaviour as being characterized by initial approximate semantic reconstruction of text with a gradual refinement of the process toward exactitude both in meaning and at the surface structure level.

Doake, found that parents sometimes corrected their children's miscues but indicated that this correction tended to restrict children's engagement in reading.

The data reveal that both the teacher and students tended, on occasion, to correct miscues.

Eg. October 17, Whose Mouse Are You

Teacher points as children read :
"Where is your father?"
David reads: "in a trap" TEXT: "CAUGHT IN A TRAP"
Teacher : "Oh"
She points at caught.
David : "in, caught in a trap."

Booklike Language

Children's use of book language usually occurred when the specific text was not present. For example, a child would recite part of a poem or nursery rhyme from memory, often spontaneously without explicit instruction or cues from the teacher.

Eg. November 28, A House is a House for Me

Teacher reads : "A husk is a house for a corn."
Child : "corn ear"
Others : "ear"
Teacher : "ear. A pod is a place for a "
Child : "pie"
Teacher : "pea, a pea. A nutshell's a house for a hickory "
Child : "nut"
Another child : "Hickory dickory dock."

On other occasions, children reconstructed a familiar poem or nursery rhyme, using the pattern of the original but substituting some of their own language.

Eg. November 12, Related Activity, The Farmer And The Skunk.

The teacher has asked Roy to come up to the big book and select the line from the text that he likes best. He points to the line THE FARMER TOOK A BATH. Another child, somewhat surreptitiously, begins to sing:

"The farmer took the bath
The farmer took the bath
Hi-ho-a-dairy-o
The farmer took a bath "

Sharing Big Books

As is demonstrated in Table 5.5, drawing attention to illustrations was the most prominent type of interaction (30%).However, nearly one half of the interactions of this type occurred with the text What Can You See?.

Table 5.5
Attention to Input

	Print	Grapho-phonic	Illustration	Booklike Language	Miscues Correction	Total
Big Books	49	24	56		45	205
		6	5	15		
	24%	15%	30%	7%	24%	100%
Related Activities	61	78	24	17	21	269
	5	60	2		1	
	25%	51%	10%	6%	8%	100%

On some occasions, the teacher referred to illustrations to highlight print that accompanied the illustrations.

Eg. November 4, I Like This Book

The illustration is that of a miniature house. Each of the rooms and the various objects are labelled.
Teacher, pointing to illustration : "Ah, look at this - there's the kitchen. And what - this is the mouse house. He has a ballroom, a carpet, a piano, a fireplace,a lamp,a couch, a breakfast room."

Mrs. Anthony also attended to illustrations to provide an explanation

of the message the illustration was attempting to convey.

Eg. November 12, The Farmer and The Skunk

Teacher : " See how the artist did that. This one, this tree is different. (Turns to a page read earlier) "The way he put lines on this one shows there's some action. That's the way the artist shows that there's some action."

In other instances, the teacher simply commented upon an illustration.

Eg. November 19, One Pig, Two Pigs

Teacher, pointing to a pig in the illustration :
"He looks so happy."

Children also referred occasionally to illustrations but much less frequently than the teacher (5 instances versus 56 instances).

Attention to print and correction of miscues each accounted for 24% of the interactions which focused on text. Within big books, Mrs. Anthony usually focused on a word in context by pointing to a particular word and commenting on it or by asking a child to identify a particular word by saying it or by pointing to it.

Eg. October 29, The Pumpkin

Teacher reads : "Jumpkin, Jumpkin
We'll all have pumpkin."
Teacher : "What comes next? After they planted it what did they do?"
A child whispers : "Water. Water. Water."
Teacher points, apparently to the child who was whispering.
Child : "Water it."
Teacher : "Come and find where it says water it."

Mrs. Anthony, and even the children, although to a lesser extent, tended to correct miscues.

Eg. October 28, Black Witch, Black Witch

Children read : "Brown bat, brown bat
What do you see?

I see a white skeleton
Looking at me."
A child, questioningly :" Skeleton?"
Most children:"Skeleton, Skeleton
TEXT: WHITE SKELETON,WHITE SKELETON.
Several other children:
"White skeleton,white skeleton"
Single child: "White skeleton."
Teacher : "One, two, three." (indicating to children to begin reading this portion of text again.)

On other occasions, miscues were not corrected. These instances tended to be when the teacher was reading with the children as a group. As well, Mrs. Anthony tended to allow some leeway when a single child was reading alone.

Eg. October 21, I Thought I Saw

Elaine (points and reads) :
"I thought I saw a /p/ pun, punkin"
TEXT: I THOUGHT I SAW A PUMPKIN.
Teacher turns page. Elaine continues reading :
" But it was only a yellow sun"
TEXT: BUT IT WAS ONLY THE YELLOW SUN

Gumperz (1972) observed that teachers corrected the miscues of children in the slow reading group but tolerated the miscues of children in the high reading group. This was not seen in Mrs. Anthony's class. Rather, the determing factor seemed to be the degree to which the reader deviated from the text and whereas she tolerated the miscue in the example above, she was not willing to tolerate the miscue in the example shown below.

Eg. October 21, I Thought I Saw

Stephanie, pointing, reads word by word :
"I thought I saw a Jack-O-Lantern"
Teacher turns page.
Stephanie reads :
"But it was only a orange heart."
TEXT : BUT IT WAS ONLY A HEART.
Teacher : " Drop the word orange."

Mrs. Anthony sometimes (15%) focused attention on graphophonic

information in an attempt to help children identify particular words.

Eg. October 15, In A Dark, Dark wood

Teacher points and reads, children read with her:
"There was a dark, dark "
Teacher points to the word 'chest'.
Several children : "box"
Another child : "cat"
Teacher : "Try and see what the sound c-h says."

Across time, attention to print declined from 34% to 24%. However, attention to graphophonic information increased from 23% to 29%. These occurrences seem to be interrelated and appear to represent a move on the part of the teacher from a more global emphasis (words) to a more finite emphasis (letter-sounds) as children received more exposure to reading. Interestingly,as the teacher's interactions centering around graphophonic information increased, children's interactions with this aspect of text declined (19% to 13%).

Within unfamiliar books, there was more attention to print (29% versus 25% in familiar) and more attention to illustrations (41% versus 11% in familiar). This seems to indicate that in unfamiliar books, Mrs. Anthony's purpose was to familiarize the children with the text and content of the book. That is, she focused on words, presumably in an effort to have children store them in memory for future use. By drawing children's attention to illustrations, Mrs. Anthony was demonstrating to children that as Huck (1979) contended, part of the message in children's books is contained in the illustrations. Through such demonstrations, she was of course helping children become familiar with the content of the books.

In familiar books there was more attention to graphophonic information (35% versus 5 % in unfamiliar) on the part of the teacher, more use of book language by the children (68% versus 17%) and slightly

more correction of miscues (29% versus 25%). The increased emphasis on graphophonic information in familiar books seemed to indicate that the teacher, knowing the children knew the content, could concentrate on the decoding aspects of reading through attending to sound-symbol relationships. There are two possible explanations as to the increase in correction of miscues in familiar books. Mrs. Anthony gave more responsibility for reading to the children in familiar books and thus there was greater probability for miscues to occur than in unfamiliar books where she read more herself. In familiar books, a single child was called on more frequently to read alone - a situation in which Mrs. Anthony corrected miscues. A second possibility is that within familiar books, she demanded exactitude whereas with unfamiliar texts she tolerated miscues and allowed for reconstructions of text at the semantic level.

While there was little variation in attention to print, graphophonic information and miscue correction across genre, there were differences in terms of attention to illustrations and children's use of book language. Attention to illustrations was more prominent in narrative (48%) and patterned texts (38%) than in verse (7%). Use of booklike language was more prominent in verse (62%) and patterned books (46%) than in narrative (20%).

Related Reading Activities

Within related activities, drawing attention to graphophonic information (51%) and print (25%) were the most prominent interactions. In related activties, in addition to drawing attention to the sounds of particular graphemes, there was an added dimension in that the teacher spent a significant amount of time having children attempt to spell words based on their sound.

Eg. October 22, New Fangled Witch

Teacher is standing by overhead projector. A portion of the text in cloze format is projected on the screen. Children are in their desks, completing the same cloze activity which is printed in a teacher constructed booklet.
Teacher : "It is not in. How do you spell in ?"
"Who knows how to spell in?"
A child : " i ... n"
Teacher : "I ... n. You look above there: it is not in the ... . How do you spell the ?"
Several children : "T...h...e"
Teacher : "OK, it's not in the
Teacher : " It is not in the closet. How do you spell closet ? What does the first [part] say ? It says /k/."
Child: "C"
Teacher : "C. /k/ ... /æ/... /klæs/
Child : "s"
Teacher : "s"

The manner in which print was attended to in related activities also changed somewhat from that of big books in that there was more emphasis placed on words in lists and words in isolation.

Eg. October 28, Black Witch, Black Witch

Teacher has words printed on strips of construction paper.
Mrs. Anthony : "Okay, see if you know all your color words. What's this one ?"
Children : "Brown"
Children continue : "Purple. Red. Yellow. Green. Brown. Gray. Orange. White. "
Teacher : "White. I tried white with white crayon and then when I laminated it, it didn't show up so I had to do it with a black felt. "
Teacher : "Okay, we're going to go over the characters. We have a "
Children : "Yellow moon. Gray owl. Brown bat. "

The amount of attention to print was relatively the same in related activites as compared to big books (24% and 25% respectively) while the amount of attention to graphophonic information more than tripled. Except for the use of booklike language which was equal across both contexts, the other types of interactions declined in related activites. This increased

attention to both print and graphophonic information in related activities suggests that Mrs. Anthony saw the overall purpose of related activities as being an opportunity to concentrate on the finer elements of print.

Attention to print more than doubled in the second half of the time observed while attention to graphophonic information increased by 26%. The increase in attention to graphophonic information over time is consistent with what occurred in big books. Nearly all of the instances of children's use of booklike language occurred in the first half, which was similar to what happened in big books.

As with big books, there was more attention to print in activities related to unfamiliar books than in activities related to familiar books. However, there was also more attention devoted to graphophonic information in unfamiliar books during related activities. As with big books, attention to illustrations occurred almost exclusively when the books were unfamiliar while children's use of book like language occurred when the books were familiar.

A higher percentage of all interactions occurred with narrative texts. However, these percentages were influenced by the fact that related activities were used more frequently with narrative texts than they were with other genre.

DEVELOPING CONCEPTS OF READING

Bloome (1986) argued that within classrooms, the meanings of the activities engaged in are constructed through interactions between teacher and students. That is, a child's meaning of what it is to read is in a large part constructed as a result of what happens within the classroom. In this section, the concepts of reading that were displayed or developed, and the children's concepts of big books are examined.

Development and Display of Sense of Reading

Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) contended that teachers demonstrate what they believe reading to be through their actions in the classroom.

> We learned that methodology does not stand outside of theory, and that these assumptions that we make limit what can be learned. Alter these assumptions and the potential for learning expands.

They also assumed that concepts of reading that teachers valued and promoted would also be valued by students (p. 98).

Mrs. Anthony's Demonstrations of Concepts of Reading

Several themes describe the concepts of reading which Mrs. Anthony displayed through her choice of materials, through her actions, and verbally.

Reading Is Meaningful

Mrs. Anthony, by virtue of the fact that she chose to use big books during the initial portion of a formal reading program, demonstrated, at least in part this concept of reading. She had the option of course of utilizing primers from a published basal series which have been decried by researchers and theoreticians on the basis of the contrived and stilted language they contain (Goodman, 1986; Hunter-Grundin, 1979). Hunter-Grundin labelled such language "primerese", because she elaborated, "it is found nowhere but in primers " (p. 76). She related an episode which exemplified the message conveyed to children when such programs are used.

> A little boy of 5 1/2 was asked what he was reading and he replied 'My reading book.' When asked what it was about, he looked puzzled and then explained ' It's not about anything - it's my reading book (her emphasis) (p. 76).

As Rhodes (1981) argued

> Many children begin first grade expecting that the magic moment of

> learning to read has arrived. That expectation often dies, however, as readiness worksheets, phonics exercises and sight word drills are used for weeks and sometimes months in preparing children to read (p.513).

By choosing to use big books, and encouraging the interactions described previously, Mrs. Anthony conveyed to the children the message that reading makes sense.

This concept of reading was also conveyed in other ways. Once for example, she had arranged incorrectly the sequence of the text The Pumpkin which was printed on sentence strips. As the teacher and children read through the text, she realized the error and as she rearranged the sentence strips, she engaged the children in a dialogue as to why the original arrangement didn't "make sense". On other occasions, Mrs. Anthony arranged in a random order words from a sentence which were printed on individual cards. She then engaged the children in helping her rearrange the cards "to make sense".

Reading is Saying Words

There were several ways in which Mrs. Anthony demonstrated this concept of reading. This message was conveyed when she had children read isolated words, and lists of words in related activities. On other occasions, she would make remarks such as, "Let's read this. You know all the words." Perhaps one of the more overt demonstrations of this meaning of reading is the example which follows.

October 21, The Jack O'Lantern

Teacher : "Okay, let's read it together."
Teacher and children read :
"The Jack O'Lantern chuckled
Then winked his funny eye.
I'd rather be a pumpkin face
Than be inside a "
Children complete : "pie"
Teacher : "Backward." (meaning "Let's read the text backward.)
Teacher and children read :
"Than be inside a pie

I'd rather be a pumpkin face
Then winked his funny eye
The Jack O'Lantern "
Children complete : "chuckled."

While the verse was still meaningful when it was read backwards, the teacher did not intend to focus on meaning but rather on saying the words. Similarly, after she and the children had just finished reading One Pig, Two Pigs (November 19), Mrs. Anthony remarked, "I like this book so we're going to read it backward. "

Reading Is A Precise Activity

Goodman (1970) has argued cogently, based on his research on miscue analysis, that reading is not a precise process and has demonstrated that readers at various levels of proficiency deviate from exact textual reproduction while reading. However, by correcting miscues which were semantically and syntactically acceptable, Mrs. Anthony demonstrated to children that reading is indeed a precise process. This message was also conveyed when she enjoined children to "Watch the words carefully." (Eg. October 15, The Teeny, Tiny Woman).

Reading Is Sounding Out Words

When children encountered difficulty in reading, Mrs. Anthony sometimes encouraged them to "sound out" words. The following example illustrates how she encouraged the children to use this strategy.

October 15, In A Dark, Dark Wood

Teacher points and reads, children read with her:
"There was a dark, dark, "
TEXT: THERE WAS A DARK, DARK, CHEST
Here the teacher pauses, signalling to the children to complete the sentence.
Teacher points to the word CHEST.
Several children : "box"
Another child : "cat"
Teacher : "try to see what the c h says; c h says the sound like /č/ - /č/"
Several children : "/č/"
Teacher : "/č/ /ɛ/ /s/ /t/
Children : "chest."

Mrs. Anthony also promoted this concept of reading when she presented words in isolation in related activities.

Eg. Related Activity, The Teeny Tiny Woman, October 15

Mrs. Anthony has just had the children give examples of various "teeny, tiny" objects. As the children supplied examples she printed them on sentence strips which she then cut into individual words. She is now holding up the individual words and children are attempting to recognize them.
Teacher holds up word TOMATOES.
A child attempts to sound it out (indiscernible)
Mrs. Anthony offers encouragement : "Someone is trying to sound it out."
Child : "(indiscernible) a - toes "

CHILDREN'S CONCEPTS OF READING

Bondy (1985), in her investigations of children's definition of reading in a grade one class, found that children had constructed six definitions of reading in the classroom she observed. She discovered that children in the low reading group shared three definitions of reading : "(1) reading is saying words correctly; (2) reading is school work; and (3) reading is a source of status" (p. 5). Children in the high reading group however constructed and demonstrated the following definitions of reading : " (1) reading is a social activity; (2) reading is a learning event; and (3) reading is a private pleasure " (pp. 9-11).

Roth (1980) and Mosenthal (1983) contended that the meaning which children ascribe to reading is largely attributable to the definitions which teachers demonstrate and display. Bondy (1985), however, proposed that the meaning which children ascribed to reading "arose out of the interaction between the teachers' practices and the notions of reading with which the children entered the classroom" (p. 65). Likewise, Brailsford (1985) found that children whom she saw as being mediated into literacy at home progressed in their reading development, despite what she perceived as a lack of mediation in the classroom.

This fits with Bloome's contention that the meaning ascribed to a literacy event is a negotiated meaning that is specific to the situation. However, Bloome, Bondy and Brailsford all intimated that children who have limited exposure to reading (literacy) outside the classroom, are more susceptible to assign a narrow meaning to reading (eg. reading is saying words.) if the teacher promotes this meaning through her interactions and the activties in which children are engaged.

Again, certain themes emerged from the data and from a semi-structured interview with three high achieving and three low achieving students after the videotaping portion of the study had been completed.

Reading Is Something I Can Do

Periodically, children would verbalize their confidence in their own ability as readers by making statements such as "I can read that." as a text was being read. For example, on October 21, Mrs. Anthony had children read individually during what she called "Super Quiet Uninterrupted Reading Time". One child was observed to turn to another and indicate somewhat triumphantly, "I've already read up to here.". Another example occurred on October 9 when one child, upon entering the classroom, saw the big book In A Dark, Dark Wood. He excitedly went to the book and exclaimed that he had to read it before Hallowe'en. Again, the following excerpt from the fieldnotes illustrates the children's perceptions of reading as an activity which they could access.

> Tuesday, November 12.
>
> Children return to classroom. Several children see the big book The Farmer and The Skunk on the easel. They read the title and remark that they can read the book.

Finally, all of the children interviewed indicated that they perceived

themselves as readers.

Reading Is Sounding Out Words

Two of the children interviewed (one high achieving child and one low achieving child) described reading as sounding out words. Lisa, when asked by the interviewer, "How do you read?", retorted, "I don't know how to read handwriting but I know how to sound out words.". Furthermore, when asked about what she liked most about reading in school, replied, "I like sounding them (words) out" (parentheses added). The following excerpt from the fieldnotes rather graphically demonstrates this notion of reading.

> October 22
>
> Karen asks me to listen to her read a sentence from the language experience chart which I agree to do. She attempts to read the sentence THE CHARACTER IS SAFE. She reads "the " and then conceals all of the word "character" except for the ch. She sounds /č/ as in church, uncovers the a and sounds /æ/, uncovers the r and sounds /r/. At this point she quits in frustration.

I Read At Home And At School

All of the children interviewed said that they read at home and in school. One child indicated that he read at his "grandma's house" and at his "auntie's". Interestingly none of the children mentioned reading environmental print outside the home and school, suggesting that they saw reading as being synonymous with reading books.

I Like Reading (Generally)

All of the children maintained in the interview that they enjoyed reading both at home and in school. However, there were provisos. Billy indicated that he liked reading generally but "I hate reading long words that I can't say". Paul, although saying that he "loved reading books", elaborated that he didn't "like reading bible stories because there are too many pages and they are boring".

While the children generally indicated a liking for reading, they

expressed a dislike for rereading. On one occasion, the teacher and children were cooperatively completing a cloze activity utilizing the overhead projector. A number of sentences from the text were used and after the children had provided missing portions of the text and Mrs. Anthony had printed their responses on the acetate, they would go back to the first sentence and reread the text that had been completed. After the fifth sentence, Mrs. Anthony indicated another rereading. One child, in obvious exasperation, asked, "Why must we reread again?". Almost simultaneously, and in a very similar tone of voice, another child remarked "Oh, no!".

Although there was some overlap in the meanings of reading demonstrated by Mrs. Anthony and the meanings of reading constructed by the children, such meanings were not congruent. Although Mrs. Anthony demonstrated reading as a meaningful activity, Karen, in her attempt to sound out "character", was willing to forego this notion of reading and stick with a strategy which wasn't working for her. Mrs. Anthony also placed considerable emphasis on reading words in isolation in related activities, yet when asked what types of materials they read, all six children interviewed mentioned reading books and stories. This seems to affirm Bondy's (1985) finding that children ascribe meanings to reading other than those demonstrated by the teacher.

Children's Concepts Of Big Books

No instances of the children displaying their concepts of big books occurred during the sessions observed. During the interview, the six children were presented with representative samples of the types and formats of the big books which Mrs. Anthony used. Included were a poem printed on a language experience chart, a patterned language text printed on sentence strips, a commercially published big book, a teacher constructed big book, and a big book composed by the children and

constructed on bristol-board. The texts on the language experience paper were not considered by the children as being books. When probed by the interviewer, they remarked that these items were not books since they didn't have any pages. Some children also mentioned that the texts written on language experience paper were not books since they had no illustrations. When asked if they would read these two the same as the others, four of the children, including the three low achieving children explained that they would not since the words were different. However, further probing revealed that these children insisted they would read all of the texts differently. One high achieving child also said reading would be different since with the two texts that he thought were not big books, there were no pages to turn. Two of the high achieving children indicated that all of the texts would be read in the same way regardless of format. It seems that these two children were thinking about the process of reading rather than about the mechanical features of the texts.

SUMMARY

In sharing big books, Mrs. Anthony and the children reading together cooperatively and the children reading as a group, were the most prominent forms of reader participation. Mrs. Anthony tended to take more responsibility for reading unfamiliar texts by reading alone and not expecting/directing children to share in the reading. Children's participation was greatest in patterned books. In related activities, Mrs. Anthony tended to read alone.

Children also overtly participated in reading by engaging in completion and echo/mumble reading. Completion reading was more prominent in unfamiliar books than in familiar books. Echo/mumble reading however, was more prominent in familiar books. Completion reading increased in the second half of the observation period and this was seen as

reflecting the teacher's awareness of the children's increasing competency as readers.

Nearly all of the questions in big book experiences were posed by the teacher. Specification questions were more prominent overall when books were being shared but were especially so in unfamiliar books. This was seen as an attempt by Mrs. Anthony to have children focus their attention on and remember text. Specification questions were even more prominent in related activities.

Several other forms of interactive behaviours were observed in big book experiences. Acceptance/confirmation, prediction, directions related to reading and specification were the most prominent of these behaviours in sharing big books. Acceptance/confirmation, which was often used by the teacher to sustain the direction of a lesson, and directions related to reading both declined over time, apparently as a consequence of there being less need for the teacher to use these interactions as the children became socialized into procedures for sharing big books. Acceptance/confirmation, specification, and directions were the most prominent of these interactions in related activities. Specification was more prominent in related activities in comparison to big books. This was interpreted as an attempt by the teacher to draw children's attention to the specifics of text in such activities.

Mrs. Anthony frequently drew children's attention to illustrations while sharing unfamiliar books. This was seen as an effort on her part to help children construct meaning for the content of the books. Considerable attention to print was also evident which again reflected what appeared to be an intent on the part of the teacher to have children remember text. Mrs. Anthony also tended to correct most miscues. In related activities attention to graphophonic information was the most prominent interaction

while the teacher also focused on print. Again, this seemed to indicate that in related activities the focus was on smaller units of text.

Several concepts of reading were demonstrated by Mrs. Anthony. Her decision to use shared big book experiences in teaching children to read signified that the overriding concept of reading demonstrated by her was that reading makes sense. Children also demonstrated various concepts of reading. There was some congruency between the concepts of reading demonstrated by Mrs. Anthony and the concepts of reading demonstrated by the children; however, there were also differences. As well, individual children tended to display idiosyncratic concepts of reading.

CHAPTER VI

MRS. WINDSOR'S CLASS

In this chapter, the interactions observed in Mrs. Windsor's class are discussed. The definitions provided in Chapter V still apply.

READER PARTICIPATION

Sharing Big Books

The predominant form of reader participation was a child reading alone (33%) (See Table 6.1). Mrs. Windsor sometimes had individual

Table 6.1

Reader Participation

	Teacher	Teacher & Children	Children	Child	Total
Big Books	223 21%	263 24%	236 22%	354 33%	1076 100%
Small Books	258 70%	45 12%	36 10%	31 8%	370 100%
Related Activities	167 29%	105 18%	108 19%	194 34%	574 100%

children read a text alone to the class after she and the children had read it together and a related activity had been completed. There was some variation in this in that on some occasions, two children would read a text each reading consecutive lines alone in a turn taking manner.

Eg. October 17, Whose Mouse Are You ?

Nancy, Justin and Heidi are at the front of the class.
Nancy turns the pages and Justin and Heidi take turns reading a line of text. The other children are sitting at their desks.
Nancy opens the book.
Heidi (in a disguised voice) :
"Whose mouse are you ?"
Teacher : "Justin"
Justin : "Ah"
Teacher : "Nancy, could you track for Justin?"
Nancy puts her finger underneath NOBODY'S.
Justin still hesitates.
A child whispers : "Nobody's"

Another child whispers : "Nobody's mouse "
Justin : "Nobody's mouse "
Heidi : "Where is your mother ? "
Nancy turns page.
Justin : "Inside the cat."

Instances of the teacher reading alone, the teacher and children reading together, and the children as a group reading without the teacher were approximately equal.

A striking feature of reader participation in Mrs. Windsor's class was the manner in which she controlled reader participation within some texts. In addition to signals such as "Let's read this together" which in themselves control reader participation, Mrs. Windsor would sometimes insist on turn taking whereby she read a line or a sentence of text herself and then the children would read the same line or sentence.

Eg. October 16, Whose Mouse Are You?

Mrs. Windsor points to title and reads:
"Whose mouse are you? "
Teacher : "Your turn."
Teacher points, children read :
"Whose mouse are you ? "
Teacher turns page.
Several children : "Whose "
Teacher : "My turn."
Teacher reads :
"Whose mouse are you ?"
Teacher turns to next page.
Several children : "Nobody's "
Teacher : "My turn."
Teacher reads :
"Nobody's mouse."
(Some children still read along here)
Teacher : "Your turn."
Children read : "Nobody's mouse."
Teacher turns to next page. She points and reads and some children read along with her:
"Where is your "
Teacher : "My turn."
She begins again; some children still attempt to read with her:
"Where "
Teacher : "Some people aren't letting me have my turn."

With other texts, the teacher insisted on reading the whole text alone initially before the children were permitted to read.

Eg November 7, Someday I'll Go Shoping

Mrs. Windsor: "I'd like to read it through, the whole book to you first and then I'm going to have you read the book back to me.

Variations in how adults read texts to children were noted by Cochran-Smith (1984).In her study there were significant differences between the way the librarian in the public library read a text to the children and the way the teacher read to the children.

> Nursery school story readings were interactive reader-listener negotiations based on the sense making of the audience. Library storyreading on the other hand was one sided performances of set texts within which the children's participation was not encouraged, and in most cases, not permitted. In library storyhours there was little or no negotiation of text and little mediation between text and listener (p.122).

She termed the role of the reader in the type of reading done by the librarian as "reader as spokesperson" (p.156). She saw the role of the teacher as being a "mediator" between text and children. Mrs. Windsor, by insisting on reading the text alone and discouraging interaction assumed a "reader as spokesperson" stance like the librarian in Cochran-Smith's study.

However, Mrs. Windsor did not insist on such a structured turn taking procedure for reader participation with all texts. With Black Cat, Black Cat (October 31) Mrs. Windsor and the children read the complete text together. At other times, she would read with the children in a supportive manner, sometimes reading along with them, then withdrawing from the reading and letting children read on their own.

Eg. October 29, On Sunday

Teacher points to text, she and children read together:

"On Friday, a witch, ghost, vampire, black cat "
Children continue to read alone : "monster and leopard "
Teacher : "/k/"
Teacher and children : "came"
Children : "to visit me "
Teacher and children : "but"
Some children : "I wasn't here "
Other children : "I wasn't home "
Teacher : "home"
Teacher and children read :
"So the witch "
Children read : "said, we shall "
Teacher and children : "return on "
Some children : "Sunday"
Other children : "Saturday"
Teacher : "What comes after Friday ?"
Children : "Saturday"

There was considerable variation in reader participation across genre. In patterned language texts, the predominant form of reader participation was an individual child reading alone while the teacher reading alone was the least dominant. The language in such texts, as Goodman (1986) explained, allows "for kids to get a sense of where the book is going and to predict what is coming next " (p. 47). One would expect, therefore, that the teacher would engage children in reading such texts alone. Similarly, because the language is comparatively easy for children to process, there would be many more occasions when the children could read along with the teacher or read as a group without the teacher. Consequently, occasions when the teacher would read alone were fewer. The writer speculates that the amount of time spent by the teacher reading alone in these texts would have been less had not the teacher imposed the turn taking protocols.

Overall, within narrative texts, the various forms of reader participation were equally prominent. However, Noisy Nora, which was the lengthiest of the big books that were used, was reread by a child with some help from another. There was a disproportionate amount of time where a child read alone in this text.

The amount of time a child spent reading alone was quite minimal in verse (8%). Reading of a shared nature (i.e. teacher and children reading together, children reading together) and the teacher reading alone were both more prominent within verse than in the other genre. With verse, there appeared to be less concern on Mrs. Windsor's part, with controlling reader participation. She tended to begin reading the text and to let the children join with her in the reading, sometimes opting out of the reading and letting children continue reading on their own. The writer speculates that reading verse exemplified what Rosenblatt (1980) referred to as "aesthetic reading". That is, such reading was done for its own intrinsic worth and Mrs. Windsor felt less inclined to demand specific text engagement from the children.

Over time, the frequency of the teacher reading alone decreased from 28% in the first half of the term to 16% in the second half. While all of the other forms of reader participation also increased in the second half, the amount of time a child spent reading alone nearly doubled. These trends were seen as a willingness on the part of Mrs. Windsor to give the children more opportunity to read on their own as their competencies as readers increased.

The teacher read alone more frequently when a book was familiar (28% versus 17% in unfamiliar) while a child reading alone was more prominent in unfamiliar books. This was unexpected since one would have speculated that the teacher would have taken more responsibility for reading unfamiliar texts and at the same time, called on individual children to read alone more frequently when they were dealing with familiar books.

Sharing Small Books

The teacher reading alone was by far the most dominant form of

reader participation in small books (70%). When small books were being read, Mrs. Windsor invoked quite different procedural display from when big books were read. She rarely insisted on the "my turn, your turn" scenario within small books and children were permitted to read along with her when they could (Eg. Brown Bear, Brown Bear). Unlike big books, small books usually were not reread. When reading small books, Mrs. Windsor assumed what Cochran-Smith (1984) described as a "mediator" or "negotiator" of text role. That is, Mrs. Windsor's role in reading small books was quite similar to the teacher's role in Cochran-Smith's study. Mrs. Windsor's purpose for reading small books was different from her purpose for reading big books in that enjoyment of the experience seemed to be central to the former whereas remembering words and texts seemed to dominate the latter.

The patterns of reader participation for small books were quite similar in the first and second half of the study. The familiarity of the text affected the amount of participation by the children. With unfamiliar texts, children participated in the reading 17% of the time as compared with 71% of the time when the text was familiar. Within familiar texts, the teacher and children reading together was the predominant form of reader participation (34%). Intuitively one would expect these patterns to occur and are similar to the findings of Doake (1981).

Across genre, the teacher read alone more when the text was narrative (80%) and verse (70%) as compared to patterned language where she read alone 33% of the time. As children's participation in small books was usually voluntary on their part, this was seen as supporting Goodman's (1986) contention that the repetitive and cyclical nature of patterned language enhances the desire of children to engage in reading them (p. 47).

Related Reading Activities

Reading within related activities tended to be more fractured than in big books and small books in that it usually involved smaller units of text such as sentences, phrases, and in some cases, isolated words. All forms of reader participation were involved in related activities. However, a child reading alone (34%) or the teacher reading alone (29%) were predominant.

One activity which was frequently used was a form of cloze procedure where the teacher printed on the chalkboard portions of a text that had already been read. She then had the children print the text in their writing notebooks filling in the missing words. The following is an example which was done after I Am A Monster had been read.

My name is_____ .
I am a _____ monster .
I live _____ .
I can_____ .
Some monsters are _____ .
Some monsters like _____ .

After the children had finished the exercise, Mrs Windsor had individual children go to the front of the class and read his or her version to the other children.

Eg October 24, Related activity, I Am A Monster
Nancy goes to front of class and reads :
"My name is Grover.
I am green.
I live on Sesame Street.
I can jump.
Some monsters (indiscernible)
Some monsters like food ."

In another similar type of related activity, Mrs. Windsor printed on the chalkboard a sentence or phrase from a book that had just been read and then had a child read that portion of text. A substantial portion of the examples of a child reading alone occurred in activites such as these.

The prevalence of the teacher reading alone also reflected the nature of the related reading activities. Mrs. Windsor, like Mrs. Anthony, quite frequently used minimal cues activities as a followup to the reading of a text. She also tended to read and reread the text as the following excerpt from the transcripts demonstrates.

Eg. November 14, Related Activity, Humpty Dumpty

Teacher has the following printed on the chalkboard.

HUMPTY DUMPTY WA_ AN ___.
HE S_T ON A _____.
HE FE_ D N.
HIS __ELL CR___ED.
HIS __LK _____ G_____D.

Teacher : "I'm asking David. One person."
Teacher reads : "Humpty Dumpty was an "
Child : "egg"
Teacher : "I was asking one person. Okay, can you read it again for me David, please ? "
David : "Humpty Dumpty had "
Teacher : "No, what does that say ?"
Child : "the "
Teacher : "/w/"
David : "/w/"
Teacher : "What word did we say that was ?"
David : "/w/"
Teacher : "was"
David : "an egg"
Teacher : "an egg. What am I missing in was ?"
Several children : "s"
Teacher : "Ernest?"
Ernest : "s"
Teacher : "s. Who can spell egg for me ? Tony?"
Tony : " e ... g ... g "
Teacher (as she writes) : "e"
Tony : "g ... g "
Teacher : "g ... g "
Teacher points to text and reads :
"Humpty Dumpty was an egg.
He /s/ /t/ on a blank."
Child : "sat"
Teacher continues : "He /t/ ... /d/. His. "
Teacher : "We're going to have a little bit of trouble with this ."
Teacher points and reads :
"Humpty Dumpty was an egg."
Teacher : "Who can read the second sentence for me ? "

Over time, the proportion of time the teacher and children read together decreased from 22% to 12% while the amount of time the children read as a group increased from 15% to 25%. However, since the other forms of reader participation remained relatively stable, no significance was attributed to these changes.

Mrs. Windsor tended to read alone more in activities relating to unfamiliar books (37%) than in familiar books (21%) while an individual child read alone more in activities related to familiar books (38%) than in unfamiliar books (30%). Although this would seem to indicate that the teacher gave more responsibility for reading when the activities related to familiar books, this was not always consistent in that instances of the children reading as a group was greater in those activities related to unfamiliar books (20% versus 16% for activities related to familiar books). Similarly, the teacher tended to read with the children as a group more in activities related to familiar books (24% versus 13% for activities related to unfamiliar books).

Within narrative texts the teacher reading alone accounted for 56% of reader participation. All of the narrative texts were unfamiliar and thus this pattern is consistent with the fact that the teacher tended to read alone more within activities related to unfamiliar texts. Likewise, the teacher read alone much more in small books that were narratives. The teacher reading alone was also the most dominant form of reader participation in verse. This was true also in big books and in small books. Within patterned language texts, a child reading alone was the dominant form of reader participation (38%).

In general, genre seemed to affect patterns of reader participation in all contexts in that the teacher read alone more when the texts were narrative or verse while the children were allocated more opportunity/

responsibility for reading with patterned language texts.

NATURE OF CHILDREN'S READING

Sharing Big Books

Echo/mumble reading accounted for 60% of these interactions.(See Table 6.2) This is inconsistent with Doake's (1981) findings. Over time, echo/mumble reading was equal in both halves of the study. Instances of completion reading, on the other hand, nearly doubled in the second half of the term. Since completion reading was usually cued by the teacher, this trend was seen as indicative of her perception of the growth in the children's competence as readers.

Table 6.2

Nature of Children's Reading

	Mumble/Echo Reading	Completion	Total
Big Books	50 60%	33 40%	83 100%
Small Books	34 30%	81 70%	115 100%
Related Activities	27 79%	7 21%	34 100%

Mrs. Windsor's manner of turn-taking sometimes discouraged the children from engaging in echo/mumble reading when she imposed the turn taking routine. The excerpts from the transcripts which follow illustrate this:

November 7, Someday I'll Go Shopping

Teacher (points as she reads) :
"Someday I'll go shopping "
Child : "and get what I "
Teacher : "Shh! My turn. I'm going to read the whole book."
Another child : "get what I like "
Teacher points and reads :
"Someday I'll go shopping and get what I want. "
Child : "want"
Teacher : "And there he is going shopping. "

Teacher reads : "I'll get a big, big "
Some children complete almost simultaneously with the teacher : "watermelon"
Teacher continues to read :
"and put it in the cart"
Some children echo : "cart"
Teacher : "My turn now. "

This transcript shows that children persevered in cooperatively reading the text, in spite of the admonishments from the teacher not to do so.

In unfamiliar books, there was more echo/mumble reading (69%) than in familiar books (49%) while completion reading was more prominent in familiar books (55%) than in unfamiliar books. The prominence of echo/mumble reading in unfamiliar books might be partly attributable to the fact that there was more shared reading (i.e. children and teacher reading together and children reading as a group) in familiar books. With such reading it would seem that there would be less need for children to engage in echo/mumble reading. Similarly, some children could have conceivably engaged in echo/mumble reading while the others were reading together and not have been detected by the recording equipment. However, both these findings are inconsistent with those of Doake (1981) who found that children rarely engaged in these behaviours within unfamiliar books. The predictability and repetitiveness of the language of the texts, the increased maturity of the children, the fact that some children might have been familiar with the texts and the possibility that the children had engaged in these behaviours in the home prior to school, might account for the inconsistencies between these finding and those of Doake.

Within narratives echo/mumble reading was much more prominent (86%) than completion reading (14%). In verse there were no instances of completion reading and only two instances of echo/mumble reading. In patterned language texts, echo/mumble reading and completion reading

occurred with the same frequency.

Sharing Small Books

The nature of children's reading in small books was almost completely the opposite of that of big books in that completion reading (70%) was much more prominent than echo/mumble reading (30%). This is consistent with Doake's findings with respect to shared reading in the home.

Over time, instances of echo/mumble reading nearly doubled in the second half while completion reading increased sevenfold although there were more small books used in the first half (7) than in the second half (5). Although completion reading also increased in big books over time, the increase was much less. Since completion reading was a teacher cued behaviour for the most part, the increase seems attributable to a change in the teacher's strategy and intentionality. As with big books, some increase in completion reading was expected over time.

Echo/mumble reading was more prominent in unfamiliar books than in familiar books. However, the children tended to read familiar texts cooperatively with the teacher and therefore there was less need/ opportunity for them to engage in echo/mumble reading.

Echo/mumble reading was confined largely to verse (47% of its occurrence) and narrative (41% of its occurrence) while nearly all completion reading occurred in verse. Patterned small books did not evoke much student participation which was unexpected since this form of language lends itself to student participation.

Related Reading Activities

There were, of course, many fewer instances of echo/mumble reading and completion reading in related activities than in big books or small books because there was much less reading of connected text. As in

the case of big books, echo mumble reading was much more prominent (79%) than was completion reading (21%). Instances of echo/mumble reading decreased slightly in the second half of the observation period while there were no instances of completion reading in the second half. The patterns within familiar/unfamiliar texts were quite similar to those in big books. Similarly, across genre, the patterns were similar to those found in big books.

Overall, the nature of children's reading seemed to be quite similar in related activities and big books and quite dissimiliar in small books.

INTERACTIVE BEHAVIOURS-QUESTIONING

Although Mrs. Windsor asked most of the questions, overall (88%), questioning was less the domain of the teacher here than in Mrs. Anthony's class where 98% of the questions were generated by the teacher. Child generated questions were more prominent in big books (23% of the questions asked) and least prominent in related activities (4%) while the median value was in small books (13%). The questions posed by the children functioned similiarly to those asked by the teacher.

Sharing Big Books

The most prominent type of question asked by the teacher in big books was specification (39%) while confirmation questions were also relatively prominent (17%). (See Table 6.3). Hayden (1985) also found that parents tended to ask more specification questions. Specification questions were usually of the type "What does this say " (in reference to a line of text or a word); occasionaly, but less frequently, such questions focused on the overall content. By asking specification questions, Mrs. Windsor was directing children's attention to specific textual items. This supports the conjecture made in Chapter III that an overriding purpose in using big books was to focus children's attention on text so as to have

Table 6.3

Interactive Behaviours - Questioning

		Prediction	Confirmation	Specification	Elaboration	Clarification	Total
Big Books	(T)	16	36	83	23	9	167
	(C)		6	33	1	10	50
		7%	19%	54%	11%	9%	100%
Small Books	(T)	15	18	82	8	6	129
	(C)			2	2	16	20
		10%	12%	56%	7%	15%	100%
Related Activities	(T)	12	52	226	43	22	355
	(C)		3	1	1	10	15
		3%	15%	61%	12%	9%	100%

them store the text in memory.

Sixty per cent of the questions asked by the children were specification questions and all but one of these were asked in the second half of the term. Given the high priority of specification questions in Mrs Windsor's repertoire, this would seem to support the contention of Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984) that children ascribe meaning to reading events as a result of what is displayed and demonstrated to them by the teacher. It is difficult to rationalize the increase in the children's use of specification questions over time other than that the children were modelling the behaviour of the teacher. Clarification questions were asked with almost equal frequency by the teacher and the children.

Over time there was a decrease in the frequency of confirmation questions asked by the teacher from 29% in the first half of the observation period to 13% in the second half while specification questions increased from 43% to 58% and elaboration questions increased from 9% to 19%.

Mrs. Windsor asked more specification questions in unfamiliar books (59% versus 42% in familiar books) and more confirmation questions (26% versus 4%) and elaboration questions (22% versus 4%) within familiar

books. These patterns suggest that in unfamiliar books, the teacher aimed to have children focus their attention on the specifics of text and content while with familiar texts, the focus seemed to change in that the questioning seemed to be aimed at going beyond the text to get children to relate the text to their life experiences in what Cochran-Smith (1984) termed " text to life interactions" (p. 224).

Specification questions were dominant in all genre; otherwise, genre did not significantly affect the pattern of questioning.

Sharing Small Books

Specification questions were equally prominent in small books and virtually all of them were posed by the teacher. The pattern of questions changed over time in that the number of specification questions more than doubled in the second half of the observation period while nearly all of the prediction questions and three quarters of the elaboration questions were asked in the first half. This suggests that as the term progressed, Mrs. Windsor narrowed the focus even more toward text she was reading.

In familiar books, specification questions were more frequent (76%) than in unfamiliar books (52%). However, the majority of the questions in familiar books occurred within one text, Nursery Rhymes (October 28). On this occasion, Mrs. Windsor had the children identify portions of the text after she had read a particular nursery rhyme and this accounted for the inordinate number of specification questions. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from the transcripts.

Teacher reads :
" Hey diddle diddle,the cat and the fiddle
The cow jumped over the moon
The little dog laughed to see such sport.
And the dish ran away with the spoon.
Teacher :"I'm going to ask different people to come up and point to different parts of this. Who can find the little dog laughed ? "
A child : "I could . "
Teacher : "Roger, where does it say the little dog laughed ? "

Roger points to the appropriate part of the text and reads :
" The little dog laughed to see such sport. "
Teacher :"Good. Where does it say the cow jumped over the moon ? "

Seventy five percent of the clarification questions were asked by the children - all of them in unfamiliar books. This was interpreted as attempts by the children to make sense of these texts and exemplified what Cochran-Smith (1984) described as negotiation of text.

Although in all three genre, specification questions were predominant, prediction questions accounted for 25% of the questions asked by the teacher in narratives. Prediction questions were infrequently asked in verse (5%) and not at all in patterned language books. Mrs. Windsor's questions seemed to be based on the components of story structure (Gordon and Braun,1983; Mandler and Johnson,1977; Rummelhart,1978; Stein and Glenn,1977; Thorndyke,1977) and thus narratives, which possess such a structure, are conducive to this type of predicting while patterned language and verse are not.

Related Reading Activities

Specification questions (61%) were by far the most dominant in related activities. As with with big books, an overriding purpose of these questions was to focus children's attention on specific text items.

Eg October 17,Related Activities,Whose Mouse Are You ?

Teacher :" Jeremy,what does the second line say ?"

Some related activities were structured so as to have the children extend on the content of a text. As is demonstrated in the following excerpts from Someday I'll Go Shopping, Mrs. Windsor utilized specification questions to engage children in "text to life" interactions (Cochran-Smith,1984).

Eg.1 Mrs. Windsor : "I'd like to know what supermarkets you go to ? What supermarket do you go to Wayne ? "
Wayne : "Ah, Safeway. "
Teacher : "Alright. That's a big one isn't it? " A lot of people go to Safeway. What supermarket do you go to Andrea ? "
Andrea : " I go to Super- I, I go to Superstore and Food For Less.

Eg. 2 Mrs. Windsor : "Lorna, what would you buy if you went to a supermarket ? "
Lorna : "Oranges."
Teacher : "Wayne ?"
Wayne : "Donuts."
Teacher : "Oh. "
Teacher : "Okay, what would you buy, Jeremy?"
Jeremy : " I would buy gum. "

Specification questions were sometimes asked in order to have children recall the content of a text which had been read previously.

Eg. October 16, Related Activity, Whose Mouse Are You?

Mrs. Windsor : "How did the mouse solve his problem? When we have a problem, we usually have to solve it. And he had some good ways of solving his problem. Yes, Charlene?"
Charlene : "(Indiscernible.)"

Mrs. Windsor : "Could you speak a little louder for us."
Charlene : "(Indiscernible.)"
Mrs. Windsor : "Shake the cat, that's right."
Mrs. Windsor : "Can someone else help her out? How did he get his father out? Yes, Jody?"
Jody : "He saw - he saweded "
Mrs. Windsor : " He saw the trap. And then what did he do ?"
Jody : " He saweded it - he saweded it. "
Mrs. Windsor : "He- oh, he sawed it. Okay. "

When specification questions were used in this capacity, they were seen as examples of what Morris (1985) referred to as assessment questions in that their primary function seemed to be to determine whether or not memory (and possibly comprehension) of the text had occurred.

Within related activities, specification questions decreased over time while elaboration and clarification questions increased. The decrease

in specification questions was the opposite of what occurred in big books and small books. This suggests that the interactions in related activities complemented those of the books in that when specifics were a priority in the actual reading of the books, they were less a priority in related activities and vice versa.

As with big books and small books, specification questions were prominent across all genre.

OTHER INTERACTIVE BEHAVIOURS

Sharing Big Books

Acceptance/confirmation (27%), directions related to reading (22%), prediction (10%), and prompting/cueing (10%) were the most prominent interactions in Mrs. Windsor's class. These interactions are shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4

Interactive Behaviours - Others

		Prediction	Transcendence	Elaboration	Clarification	Prompting/Cueing	Competency	Directions	Acceptance	Non-acceptance	Establishing Meaning	Specification	Total
Big Books	(T)		24	24	22	63	13	271	206	22	1	11	657
	(C)	123	25	68	24	57			127	79		63	566
		10%	4%	8%	4%	10%	1%	22%	27%	8%		6%	100%
Small Books	(T)		24	32	28	2	9	95	174	20	12	14	410
	(C)	93	40	73	14	1			95	24		96	436
		11%	8%	12%	5%	.5%	1 %	11%	32%	5%	1.5%	13%	100%
Related Activities	(T)		23	45	27	52	20	334	475	10	1	21	1008
	(C)	155	38	114	38	25			193	65		231	859
		8%	3%	9%	3%	4%	1%	18%	36%	4%		14%	100%

The prominence of acceptance/confirmation was attributable to the

various functions which it fulfilled, for in addition to being used by the children in response to confirmation questions asked by the teacher, it was also used by Mrs. Windsor to indicate that an answer to a question was acceptable, to signal approval of a child's (or the children's) oral reading, as well as to indicate approval of unsolicited statements from the children. Mrs. Windsor was responsible for nearly two thirds of these interactions.

The salience of directions related to reading is consistent with the findings of Browne (1971) and Bloome (1986). Mrs. Windsor's insistence on turn taking undoubtedly contributed to the relatively high incidence of this type of interaction.

The prominence of predicting was somewhat contradictory, given that Mrs. Windsor did not seem to promote this strategy through either completion reading or questioning. However, children tended to predict without being prompted as the following example demonstrates.

October 16, Whose Mouse Are You ?

Teacher reads :
" Where is your father ?"
A child :"He's in the cat too."
Teacher reads :
" Caught in a trap .
Where is your sister ?"
Child predicts : " In the (indiscernible) ."
Another child : " Far-"
Teacher :" My turn boys and girls. You'll get your
turn in a little while ."
Teacher reads :
" Far from home."

Over time, prompting/cueing increased nearly fourfold. In the first half of the observation period, the children engaged in prompting/cueing more than twice as frequently as the teacher. However, in the second half the teacher was responsible for most of these interactions. As the children gained in competency in reading, one would have expected less

need for this kind of interaction. It is also difficult to explain why initially, the teacher prompted much less than the children but as the term progressed,used the strategy to a greater extent. Acceptance/confirmation declined in the second part of the term, a trend similar to that in Mrs. Anthony's class and probably attributable to the same factors.

In unfamiliar books, prediction was more prominent than in familiar books (12% versus 8%)as were prompting/cueing (14% versus 5%) and specification (24% versus 19%). The greater use of prompting/cueing was to be expected in unfamiliar texts in that children would need more assistance with texts with which they were unfamiliar. The proportionally greater use of specification in familiar books - both the teacher and the children specified twice as much in familiar books-seems anomalous in light of the fact that the teacher asked more specification questions in unfamiliar books and otherwise there seemed to be less emphasis on the specifics when the text was familiar. Similarily, one would have expected the children to predict more in familiar texts. An examination of the data revealed no explanations for these findings.

In narratives, there was proportionally more clarification (13%) and prompting/cueing (22%)than in the other genre types. Since all of the narratives were unfamiliar, the prominence of prompting/cueing seemed attributable to this factor. And although familiarity/unfamiliarity did not affect the use of clarification overall, one would have expected it to be more prominent in unfamiliar books. Given that all of the narratives were unfamiliar, the prominence of clarification was expected. Directions related to reading (13%) and specification (11%) were less prominent in narratives than in the other genre.

Sharing Small Books

Acceptance/confirmation (32%), specification (13%), elaboration

(12%), directions related to reading (11%), and prediction (11%) were the most frequent interactions in small books. Acceptance/confirmation and prediction were used with approximately the same regularity in both big books and small books. However, specification and elaboration were more frequent in small books (versus 6% and 8% respectively in big books) while directions related to reading were much less frequent in small books (versus 22% in big books).

Because Mrs. Windsor did most of the reading in small books, there was of course less need for directions than in big books where there was much more cooperative reading. More than one third of the elaboration and one half of the specification occurred in one book, A House Is A House For Me. This book was read on two occasions, November 27 and 28. The content of this book lent itself to these types of interactions as the following excerpt from the transcription of the reading illustrates.

Mrs. Windsor reads:
" A hill is a house for an ant, an ant.
A hive is a house for a "
Children complete: "bee"
Teacher reads:
" bee. A hole is a house "
A child : " for mice "
Teacher reads:
" for a mole or a mouse "
A child: "What's a mole ?"
Another child: "a mole"
Teacher: "A mole is a little animal that lives underground."
A child: "That's kinda like a squirrel. "
Teacher reads:
"And a house is a house "
Children and teacher:
"for me."
Teacher reads:
"A web is a house for a spider .
A bird builds its nest in a tree.
There is nothing so snug, as a bug in a rug.
And a house is a house "
Children and teacher:
" for me."
Teacher: "Remember yesterday we read the book called Inside, Outside, Upside Down. Well here's a little person in a box living in a house on a hill. What type of house is this ?" (pointing to the illustration)

Several children : "A tree house."
Teacher : "Gordon ? "
Gordon : "A tree house."
Teacher reads :
"A coop, that's a house for a chicken."
Teacher : "A chicken coop."
Child : "Look at that chicken."
Teacher reads :
"A stye, that's a house for a sow."
Children chuckle.
Teacher : "A sow is another word for a pig."
Teacher reads :
"A fold, that's where sheep all gather to sleep."
Teacher : "A sheep fold"
Teacher reads :
"A barn, that's a house for a cow."
Teacher : "What "
A child : "or a horse."
Teacher reads :
"It is also of course a house for a horse. Yes."
Child (in reference to illustration) : "A giant sheep."
Another child : "Sheep could sleep in the barn too. "

Prediction declined from 26% in the first half of the observation period to 17% in the second half. However, there was also a decline in prediction questions and although the children sometimes predicted without being prompted by the teacher, the decline in prediction seemed at least partially attributable to the decline in prediction questions. Elaboration also declined from 11% to 6%, while directions related to reading declined from 31% to 17%. The decline in directions related to reading had also similarly declined in big books. Again, the decline in the frequency of this form of interaction was seen as resulting from less need on the part of the teacher to verbally indicate what she expected as the children became more aware of the procedures (Bloome,1986). Cochran-Smith (1984) also found that children in her study became familiarized into routines during the "rug time " (i.e. story reading) in the nursery school (pp. 102-105).

The increase in specification over time was the result of the inordinate amount of this interaction in A House Is A House For Me which

was read toward the end of the observation period. Nearly one third of the instances of acceptance/confirmation also occurred in this book.

In familiar books, prediction was more prominent (30%) than in unfamiliar books (20%). This was essentially the opposite of what occurred in big books and is inconsistent with the fact that the teacher asked more prediction questions in unfamiliar books. However, since the children did predict on their own, it would seem that in familiar books the children, like those in Doake's (1981) study, "overtly participated " by predicting whereas in unfamiliar books, they were engaged in what one of the parents in Doake's (1981) study referred to as "absorbing the story" (p. 415). Mrs. Windsor was much more tolerant of such unsolicited participation in small books than she was in big books. Therefore it would be expected that the amount of predicting in big books would reflect more closely the amount of predicting prompted by the teacher.

The familiarity/unfamiliarity of the books did not markedly influence directions related to reading nor specification. However, Mrs. Windsor engaged in elaboration more frequently in unfamiliar books (9%) than in familiar books (4%). Because the content and probably some of the concepts and vocabulary were unknown to the children, it would seem to follow that the teacher would do this. Children also engaged in elaboration more when the books were unfamiliar (19% versus 4%). Mrs Windsor also asked more elaboration questions when reading unfamiliar books - a strategy which appeared to be aimed at ensuring that the children understood the content that they were encountering for the first time.

Children predicted more in narrative (26%) than in either verse (21%) or patterned language (3%). This appeared to reflect Mrs. Windsor's propensity toward encouraging prediction within a story grammar paradigm. Elaboration was also more prominent in narrative (13%) than in

verse (6%) and patterned books (3%). Directions related to reading accounted for 71% of the interactions in patterned books. The majority of these interactions, however, occurred in one particular book, the Hopscotch basal reader. With this book, the teacher had the children find various "stories" by using the table of contents and this required considerable direction from the teacher. This is shown in the following portion of the transcript.

November 6, Hopscotch

The children are sitting in their desks. They each have a copy of the Hopscotch basal reader.
Teacher: "Remember we took the story What I Can Do. (She is holding the book open to the table of contents. She points at the title) Find it in your table of contents. I found it. What I Can Do "
A child :"What I Can Do "
Another child : " It's on page (indiscernible) "
Teacher : "What I Can Do "
A child : " It's on page ten "
Another child : "nineteen "
Another child:"What-"
Child:"Nineteen"
Several children :"What I Can Do "
A child: "Here it is."
Teacher: "How many people have found it ? Okay, find the little dotted-follow the little dotted line. What page is it on ?"
Some children :" nineteen"
Teacher:" What I Can Do. I'm going to give you another story to find now. I want you to find the story called Me."
Many children: "Me" (emphasizing /m/)
Teacher:" In your table of contents."
Some children:" three"
Another child:" Page two."
Other children:" three"
Teacher: " It's on page- did you find Me? It's on page-"
Child:" Three"
Teacher : "Three. Find the story called Someday I'll Go Shopping. "

This continues for some time as the teacher has children find titles in the Table of Contents and then has them open the book to various "stories".

Acceptance/confirmation and specification were relatively of equal

prominence across all three text genres.

Related Reading Activities

Acceptance/confirmation (36%) was by far the most prevalent type of interaction in related activities while directions related to reading (18%), specification (14%), elaboration (9%), and prediction (8%) were also fairly prominent. Again, the relatively high proportion of direction related to reading and specification reflected the focus on smaller text items in related activities.

Over time, the children engaged in elaboration more in the latter portion of the study (17%) than they did initially (8%). The increase in elaboration was likely the result of the concurrent increase in elaboration questions posed by Mrs. Windsor. Specification, however, decreased over time from 16% to 10%. Similarly, there was a decrease in specification questions in the second portion of the observation period as compared to the first portion and the decrease in specification was seen as correlative with the decrease in specification questions.

In activities related to unfamiliar texts, elaboration was more prominent (11%) than in activities related to unfamiliar texts (4%). This was expected, given the unfamiliarity of the text language and the overall meaning.

Across genre, specification and directions were equally prominent. Prediction (12%) and elaboration (14%) were more prominent in narrative than in verse or patterned books. There were more directions in unfamiliar big books and small books so the trend here was consistent. The salience of prediction in activities related to narratives was also consistent with big books and small books.

ATTENTION TO INPUT

Sharing Big Books

Attending to graphophonic information accounted for 60% of the interactions in this category. (Table 6.5) Mrs. Windsor tended to emphasize the use of such information as a word recognition strategy.

Table 6.5
Attention To Input

		Print	Grapho-phonics	Illustrations	Book language	Miscues Correction	Total
Big Books	(T)	28	162	44		48	283
	(C)	15	138	30	13	22	218
		9%	60%	15%	2%	14%	100%
Small Books	(T)	34	21	84		12	151
	(C)	8	11	23	27	1	70
		19%	15%	48%	12%	6%	100%
Related Activiites	(T)	100	281	10		25	416
	(C)	25	266	5	107	20	423
		15%	65%	2%	13%	5%	100%

The following excerpt from the transcription of At My House I Saw (November 21) is illustrative of this.

> Mrs. Windsor has given each of the children a card with a sketch of an animal on it.
>
> Mrs. Windsor: "Here's a /j/ - /j/ - jaguar. (unclear)
> This goes with your picture. "
> Child stands to read.
> Teacher : "OK, /j/ - /j/ "
> Child : "jaguar"
> Child : "I can't read it."
> Teacher : "A jaguar "
> Child : "I can't read it. "
> Teacher : "Try it. What's "
> Child : "A jaguar "
> Teacher : " /i/ -/i/- eating - /j/ - /j/ "
> Child : "jelly"
> Teacher : "jelly, good. /g/ "
> Child : "Goat."

The children also tended to access graphophonic information as a word recognition strategy. Interestingly, the children's use of such

information increased nearly three fold in the second portion of the term. This seems to lend further support for the contention of Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984) that children, learn to construct meanings for and use the strategies of reading that are displayed or demonstrated by the teacher. The excerpt that follows demonstrates how children focused on graphophonic information and how the teacher encouraged such a focus.

November 21, Noisy Nora

Jody and Tony, two high achieving children are reading Noisy Nora. Tony has taken the lead in the reading.

Tony: "needed some. What does this say, /s - n/."
Teacher : "Have you tried to sound it out ? "
Tony : "/s/"
Teacher : "Make an s "
Jody : "singing"
Tony : "singing ?"
Jody : "Yeah, sing, singing "
Tony : "singing (laugh) to "
Jody : "Two ghost letters"
Tony : "So Nora had to wait. First. No. I am leaving said Nora and she "
Jody : "needed "
Tony : "needed ... No! ... /n/ "
Teacher : "Okay, what does it start with ? And I'm /n/ "
Tony : "nev"
Jody : "never"
Tony and Jody : "come back "Tony : "I '
Teacher : "Think of the sound the word starts with. "
Tony and Jody : /ð/ /ð/
Teacher : "What's that word ? "
Tony : "the"
Jody : " /ð/ the - their"
Tony : "No. There's the and y.
Teacher : "What happens when you have the and y ?"
Jody : "they"
Teacher : "Right."
Tony : "thee"
Teacher : "They, they "
Tony : "And they ... didn't hear a sound. But a "
Both boys giggle.
Teacher : "It starts like truck and train "
TEXT: BUT A TRA - LA -LA FROM JACK.
Tony : "This is h"
Teacher : "tra - la - la."

Attention to illustrations (15%) and correction of miscues (14%) were the other more commonly used interactions. About 40% of the

references to the illustrations came from the children. Similarly, almost one half the correction of miscues was done by the children.

Except for the increase in the attention to graphophonic information, the other interactions occurred with relatively the same frequency as the term progressed.

Attention to graphonic information, attention to illustrations, and correction of miscues were distributed equally across familiar and unfamiliar books. However, attention to graphophonics was more prevalent in familiar books (68%) than in unfamiliar books (54%). This was seen as the teacher narrowing the focus to the smaller units of text (i.e. symbol-sound relationships) when texts were familiar and is consistent with Mrs. Windsor's whole language philosophy and which she elaborated on in the interview after the data collection stage of the study.

> Researcher : "If you were to make suggestions to teachers as to the use of big books in their classrooms, what advice would you give.
>
> Mrs. Windsor: (she offers many suggestions but includes) "going from whole to parts."

Illustrations were referred to twice as frequently in unfamiliar books as in familiar books. One would expect more references to illustrations which were unfamiliar. If, as Huck (1979) contended, illustrations help convey the message for the child, the attention given illustrations in unfamilar books would also help children construct meaning in future readings of unfamiliar texts.

Correction of miscues occurred more frequently in unfamiliar texts (18% versus 8% for familiar texts). However, one would expect more miscues in unfamiliar material and the ratio of correction of miscues would therefore be higher. Mrs. Windsor also tended to correct most miscues including those which were semantically and syntactically acceptable, as did the children.

Attention to graphophonic information was relatively high in all genre but in verse it accounted for 88% of the interactions. Three quarters of these instances occurred within one text, Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star. This verse was printed on the chalkboard in a minimal cue format (eg. Twinkle, _ _ inkle l_ _ _ _ _ st _ _.). As it was read, Mrs. Windsor had the children provide the missing letters and the sound associated with them as the following excerpt from the transcripts illustrates.

Teacher points to print and reads:
"How I wonder what you -"
Children: "are"
Teacher:" Toby"
Toby: "a-r-e" (teacher prints letters as Toby says them)
Teacher: " Super. Are you all sitting down ? Now you don't know who I'm going to pick and I might pick you again."
Teacher points to print:"Up, Tanya."
Tanya: "p"
Teacher: "p"
Teacher, pointing to print :"Up above the /w/-world Gary ? "
Gary : "w ... w"
Teacher : "w " (She prints w.)
Teacher : "world so - oh a tricky one; two silent ghost letters"
Several children:" I know."
Teacher:" So high. Marie, do you think you know what they are ?"
Marie:" Yeah "
Teacher:" What ?"
Marie:" g- h"
Teacher:" How do you know that, Marie ?"
Marie:" I don't know."

There were few instances of correction of miscues in verse (4%). However, all of these texts were familiar to the children and Mrs. Windsor tended to do most of the reading in verse so the opportunty for children to miscue was reduced.

Sharing Small Books

Interactions focusing on illustrations were most prominent in small books (48%) while attention to print was second in prominence (19%). Attention to graphophonic information, which was quite dominant in big books, accounted for only 15% of the interactions here. Book language was

also fairly prevalent (12%). However, correction of miscues accounted for only 6% of the interactions here.

Some of the references to illustrations were of a general nature such as the example from Peterkin Meets A Star.

Mrs. Windsor : "And I like this last picture."

However, Mrs. Windsor and the children also frequently referred to illustrations to aid in constructing meaning (Huck, 1979).

Eg. October 17, Whose Mouse Are You ?

Teacher : "These little dots are the lines he follows."
Teacher moves a little cardboard mouse along the line.
Teacher : "And he's looking for some food and "
Child : "Cheese, Mark."
Teacher : "And here's the crack in the floor "
Child : "Quick open it up. "
Teacher : "and he has to go into it. "
Teacher : "He's coming out the crack in the floor."
Teacher reads :
"The mouse almost bumped into the kitchen cat."
Teacher reads :
"Crumbs, that was close. I'll come back later for the cheese."
Teacher : "There he goes."
A child : "He's running."
Teacher : "Yes, this time he's running. Do you think the cat sees him ?"
Some children : "No."
Others : "Yeah."
Child : "Yeah 'cause his eye's open."
Another child : "one eye."
Teacher : "Oh, there he goes. "
Child : "into the "
Teacher : "into the larder, the pantry. And lets see what happened. Look at what he found. "
Teacher reads :
" The mouse climbed out of an empty box of corn flakes."

Mrs. Windsor usually made a point of referring to the titles and illustrations of all of the books that were read. As she read the title or the name of the author or illustrator, she nearly always pointed to the print. She also tended to point out other "incidental" print that was not part of the text.

Eg. October 31, Lamont The Lonely Monster

Mrs. Windsor has a book opened to the title page :
"It is kind of a neat book because it has spooky things.
And it says (she points to print) this book belongs to.
It belongs to Mrs. Windsor but I didn't put my name in it.

The illustrations in some of the small books contained various objects which were labelled. Mrs. Windsor nearly always drew children's attention to such print.

Eg. Mrs. Windsor: "And here it says biscuits."(points at print)
And here it says /s/
Several children : "sugar"
Teacher : "sugar"
Teacher points to CHOCOLATE DELIGHT
A child : "cookies"
Teacher : "/c/ - chocolate delight."
Teacher points to TEA : "And what does this say ?"

On occasion when Mrs. Windsor did not attend to the print on labels, a child would often draw her attention to it. For example, she omitted to lift a tab in Whose Mouse Are You ? which had LIFT printed on it and a message underneath. One of the children had already asked the teacher to read the label but she had not done so. However, the child persisted.

Child : "How come you don't read that? "
Teacher (obviously thinking the child is referring to a part of the text) : "Sh! I read it. It says back in the larder the mouse found some biscuits."
She then notices the tab, lifts it : "Sorry!"
She reads :
"They were tasty. Now for a piece of that cheese."
Teacher : "Sorry! I didn't read under there, did I?"

Children's use of booklike language was proportionately greater in small books than in big books (12% versus 2%). The number of occurrences were twice that of big books, although there were more big books utilized than there were small books. The particular text sometimes seemed to trigger a child's engagement in booklike language. For example, while Mrs. Windsor was reading Peterkin Meets A Star, a child spontaneously started to sing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star. On other occasions, children engaged

in booklike language which was unrelated to the text being read and it was as if the child was rehearsing or playing with language. At the end of the reading of A House Is A House For Me, one child, quite unexpectedly remarked "Humpty Dumpty, Bumpty Crumpty".

Attention to print was more evident in the first part of the term than in the second part (19% versus 11%). However, interactions related to illustrations increased in the second portion from 33% to 44%. Children's use of booklike language increased by 25% during the course of the study.

Illustrations were attended to more frequently in unfamiliar books (51% versus 39%), a trend which was also evident in big books. There was nearly twice as much attention to print in familiar books as in unfamiliar books. Again this was interpreted as an intention on the part of the teacher to narrow the focus of attention on the smaller elements of text once the children had become familiar with the more global elements such as the content. Hayden (1985) found that parents also focused on print when reading to their children. Drawing on the work of Ehri (1985), Hayden concluded that "parents seem to be aware that in order to become readers, their children must attend to graphic cues" (p. 88).

Genre did not affect significantly the patterns of interactions in that the patterns overall were similar in all three text genres.

Related Reading Activities

Much of the focus in related activities was on graphophonic information (65%). However, this was usually accomplished in a contextual manner through the use of minimal cues and cloze procedure. The following is an example of how Mrs. Windsor used cloze procedure to focus on sound-symbol relationships.

October 29, Related Activity, The Teeny, Tiny Woman

The following portion of the text is printed on the chalkboard.

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A TEENY TINY W_____ WHO LIVED IN A TEENY TINY H_____ WITH A TEENY TINY D____ AND A TEENY TINY C_____.

Teacher and children read :
"Once upon a time there was a teeny tiny "
Children : "wom"
Teacher : "What goes in that blank that starts with w ?"
Children : "Woman"
Teacher : "Woman. And what does it end with ?"
Children : "n"
Teacher prints 'n' : "N. Woman.And in the middle you hear womm - an."
Children : "m"
Teacher : "We know we have an "m", wo - man."
Teacher fills in o and a.
Teacher : "Okay. Would you all write woman down in your blank."
One child : "m - a - n"

Mrs. Windsor focused on print in a number of ways in related activities. For example, after reading, A House Is A House For Me, (November 28), she drew a tree on the chalkboard. She then had the children name various things that live in a tree and as the children named them, she printed them on the tree which she had drawn. On other occasions, Mrs. Windsor printed portions of a text on the chalkboard and had individual children identify words from the text. Children sometimes worked individually on activities with a print focus. In one such activity, Mrs. Windsor gave each of the children a portion of the text which she had printed and photocopied and then cut into individual words. The object of the activity, of course, was to arrange the words into the sentences that were in the text.

Almost one half the instances of booklike language occurred in relation to nursery rhymes. After Mrs. Windsor had read a number of nursery rhymes, she then let children volunteer to go to the front of the class and recite their favourite nursery rhymes.

In activities related to familiar texts, there was more attention to graphophonic information (71%) than in unfamiliar texts (51%). This trend

was similar in small books and in big books. Similarly, booklike language was more evident in activities related to familiar texts (25%) than in unfamiliar texts (4%).

There was proportionally more focus on graphophonic information (89%) and print (8%) in activities related to narratives. However, there were actually fewer interactions pertaining to these two features (138) than in verse (189) or patterned language (220). There was a relative lack of booklike language (5%) and correction of miscues (1%) in narrative where there was an inordinate amount of attention to graphophonic information. The paucity of book language in narrative is understandable as such texts tend to lack the rhyming, repetitive features in other genres. The lack of correction of miscues in narrative texts was indicative of the fact that Mrs. Windsor tended not to engage children in reading connected text in narrative. Instead, activities focused on minimal cues and cloze activities (Eg. The Teeny, Tiny Woman), connecting the knowledge from the story with children's own experiences (Eg. There's a Mouse About the House) and having children read the stories in paired reading (Eg. Noisy Nora).

MRS. WINDSOR'S DEMONSTRATION OF A SENSE OF READING

Reading Makes Sense

Mrs. Windsor's decision to use big books and to engage children in prediction, completion reading, and so forth were seen as communicating this message to the children. She also demonstrated this in related activities when she had children engage in sequencing activities and when she engaged children in what Cochran- Smith (1984) described as "life to text" and "text to life " interactions.

Reading Is Remembering Words

Mrs. Windsor displayed this concept in several ways. First of all, she

encouraged children to use mnemonics as a strategy for remembering words.

Eg. Mrs. Windsor : "What's going to help us remember green, Kristen ? "
Kristen : "The screaming e's."

In addition, as new words were introduced through the texts read, Mrs. Windsor often printed them on tagboard and gave each child a copy. On October 16, Mrs. Windsor distributed rings for children to place their new words on and told them to practice their new words. The rereading of some texts several times during a particular day supplemented by further attention to textual items through related activities was also seen as being indicative of Mrs. Windsor's concern with children remembering words.

Reading Is A Precise Activity

Mrs. Windsor's propensity to correct miscues including those which were semantically and syntactically acceptable was one way in which she demonstrated this concept of reading.

Eg October 24, Follow The Monsters

Teacher and children read:
"Follow the monsters, they all know the way.
All through the night "
Children complete :" and all through the day."
TEXT: AND ON INTO THE DAY
Teacher corrects :"and on into the day."

On one occasion, Trevor was reading from a small photocopied version of On Sunday and Mrs. Windsor was listening to him read.

TEXT: ON SUNDAY, A WITCH AND GHOST CAME TO VISIT ME BUT I WASN'T HOME. SO THE WITCH SAID "WE SHALL RETURN ON _____ .

Trevor reads:
" On Sunday, a witch and ghost came to visit me but I wasn't home. So the witch said "We'll return on Monday"

Trevor read the text this way several times, and on each occasion Mrs. Windsor corrected him by pointing to the s-h in SHALL and emphasizing the sound of the letters.

Mrs. Windsor also articulated the need for precision by admonishing the children to watch the words or to read carefully.

The Farmer And The Skunk
Mrs. Windsor to children as they are about to read the text:
"Now you have to read it carefully."

Reading Involves Metalanguage

Mrs. Windsor quite frequently used metalanguage and also encouraged children to become familiar with metalinguistic terms. Two examples follow from What I Know About Witches.

Eg. 1 : Teacher reads as she prints : "What ... I "
Teacher : "/K/ - no. Is it /k/ -no ?"
Children : "No. "
Teacher : "What letter is silent ? "
Some children : "no"
Other children : "k"

Eg. 2 : Teacher : "into - what kind of word is into, boys and girls ?"
Children : "Compound."
Teacher : "Compound. A compound - two words together."

Reading Is Sounding Out Words

Mrs. Windsor quite frequently encouraged children to use this strategy when reading. A portion of the transcript from Noisy Nora which follows exemplifies this.

November 21.

Jody and Tony are reading Noisy Nora in a paired reading situation.
Tony reads :
"Nora needed some "
TEXT: NORA NEEDED SINGING TO.
Tony :"What does this say ? s-n, I mean-"
Mrs. Windsor :"Have you tried to sound it out ?"
Tony: /s/
Mrs. Windsor: /s/
Jody: "singing"

In addition to encouraging children to sound out words, Mrs. Windsor also demonstrated this concept of reading by suggesting rules for sounding out various words.

> Eg Journal entry, October 30
>
> Today Mrs. Windsor gave a rule for sounding out the word "five" suggesting that "the e goes back to step on the head of the i causing the i to say its own name ".

CHILDREN'S CONCEPTS OF READING

I Am A Reader

Of the 6 children interviewed, only one (a low achieving child) did not perceive himself as a reader. Children were observed at various times over the course of the data collection indicating their belief in their abilities as readers by making statements such as " I can read that". On other occasions, a child would insist on his or her own independence in reading.

> Eg November 21, Noisy Nora
>
> Tony and Jody are reading the story with Tony assuming most of the responsibility for reading. Although Mrs. Windsor has just read the book to the class, the boys are having some difficulty reading it. I am sitting near the boys listening to them read. Tony is using me as a resource person.
>
> Tony:" Mr. Anderson, what dose this say ? f-i-r-s-t"
> Me:"first"
> Tony reads;
> " First /s/-she-"
> A third child has joined us at the table and she says:/d/
> Tony:" No, /b/-breaked"
> Jody:"banged"
> Tony reads:
> "banged . . . . . the window "
> Third child: "I'll help you with it."
> Tony:"no!"
> Jody: /k/-/k/-/kw/-/kw/
> Third child:"quiet"
> Tony reads:
> "quiet said her father"
> Third child "her dad."
> Jody (indicating to the child that her help isn't appreciated):"We're reading !"
> Tony:"his-her father"
> Tony:"hush?"

Jody (in a confirmatory tone): "hush"
Tony : "said her mother. "
TEXT : SAID HER MOM.
Tony : "Nora said her sister."
Jody : "sister"
Tony : "Why are you so dumb ?"
They giggle.
Jody : "dumb! How many pages have we got ?"
Tony : "I don't know."
Tony reads : "Jack had g - o - t- t- e- n ?"
Me: "gotten "
Tony : "gotten /f/ - What does this say, f-i-l-t-h-y ?"
Me: "filthy"
Tony : "filthy - /M/ - mate - does this say mate -
m-o-t-h-e-r ?"
Me : "mother "
Tony : "mother "
Jody (in protest) : "He's not reading - we are."

Reading is Sounding Out Words

The children displayed this perception of reading in a number of ways including admonishing one another to "sound out" a word when they encountered difficulty in reading. The following is an example from the field notes of November 28.

> Murray asks me to read GREEN DOT for him from his Zeebo book.
> (Zeebo books were essentially colouring books which involved following directions. Eg. COLOUR THE CLOWN'S HAT RED.)
> Before I had a chance to tell him, Tony who is sitting next to Murray says to him : "Can't you sound it out ?"
> Meanwhile, less than five minutes previously, Tony had asked me for help in identifying the words.

Sometimes, children relied on sounding out words to the exclusion of their intuitive knowledge of language. During the reading of I Am A Monster (October 24), the teacher and children read a sentence containing the word KNOW. One child remarked it's /kno/, not /no/. This tendency is also exemplified by the following excerpt from the transcriptions of the interview with Roger, a low achieving child.

> I show Roger a picture of a checkout counter of a supermarket. A gentleman has purchased a quantity of white bread. I am asking Roger questions to see if he will access the print on the labels of the bread in the picture.

Roger:" He's going to buy some bread."
Me:"Yes, he's buying some bread, isn't he ?"
Roger:"Yeah."
Me:"What kind of bread has he bought? Is it white bread or brown bread ?"
Pause
Roger:"Brown bread."
Me:" Huh,huh.Roger, do you go to the store with your mom?"
Roger:"Yeah."
Me:" What kind of bread do you buy, brown bread or white bread ?"
Roger:" We buy soft white bread."
Me:" Huh, huh. If your mom said,'Roger, pick up some white bread for me, how would you know which bread to pick up?"
Pause
Roger:" Tell by the, by the, by the colour of it."
Me:" You can tell by the colour. Is there-"
Roger:" and you have to sound it out."
Me:" Okay .Roger look at this picture again. Are you sure that's brown bread ?"
Roger looks closely at the picture:" No, I'm not sure."
Me:" You're not sure."
Roger:" I think it's white cause it starts with that (points to w on the label) w."
Me:" Okay. So you said you sound it out. What do you sound out Roger to find out if it's brown bread or white bread ?"
Roger:" I sound out the words, and then you, and then you sound them out faster and then you get to know what it is."
Me:" Huh,huh. Can you sound out this word here for me Roger ?" (Here I point at the word WHITE on the label)
Roger: /w/-/h/-/I/
Me:" What do you think it says ?"
Roger: /t/-/i/ (pause)
Roger:" Fresh?"

N.B. Throughout this interview, Mrs Windsor can be heard in the background as she completes a minimal cues activity and where she is encouraging children to sound out words.

Not all children were so constrained in their reading by relying exclusively on this strategy as the two examples from the field notes which follow illustrate.

November,21: Cheryl and Johnny are reading Noisy Nora. When they try to read the sentence FIRST SHE KNOCKED THE LAMP DOWN, they encounter difficulty with the word KNOCKED. Johnny tries to sound it out but articulates the /k/ and cannot come up with a word. Cheryl reads past KNOCKED and uses the context to identify the word.

November 14: Donald is reading in his Zeebo book. He is reading the sentence COLOUR THE EXIT SIGN RED. He read as far as EXIT,encountered difficulty and exclaimed "Holy smoke!". He scanned the illustration, saw an EXIT

sign and immediately went back to the text and read " Colour the exit sign red ".

Reading Is Saying Words

During the interview, several of the low achieving children, when asked what they read, indicated that they could read words. For example, Tina, a low achieving child, remarked that she could read "colour words ". On the other hand, two of the high achieving children in response to the same question, indicated that they read " books" and "poems".

Some children also demonstrated this concept of reading by their failure to monitor and self-correct miscues which were semantically or syntactically unacceptable. Timmy, a child rated as a high achiever by Mrs. Windsor, demonstrated this while reading Little Bear.

> Timmy reads:" I'm little bear said mother bear."
> TEXT: "MY LITTLE BEAR, "SAID MOTHER BEAR.
> Timmy reads:"See the mother bear."
> TEXT: " SEE," SAID MOTHER BEAR.

In addition to not monitoring for meaning, Timmy read in a halting, word by word manner articulating each word in the same intonation pattern.

Reading Involves Using Metalinguistic Terms

The children frequently used metalinguistic terms such as " silent letter ", and "compound words". The following excerpt from the field notes exemplifies this.

> November 28: Roger asks me to identify PORPCUPINE for him which I do. He then asks me if it's a compound word and I tell him that it isn't. Shortly after, he returns again and asks me to identify TREEHOUSE for him. Again he ask me if it is a compound word. I tell him it is, at which point he drew two curved lines underneath the word as follows TREEHOUSE, saying, "That's what you have to do with compounds".

The children also used unconventional metalinguistic terms such as "screaming e's " to refer to the phoneme /i/ in the word green or "ghost letters " in reference to unarticulated letters in words.

I Read At Home And At School

During the interview, all but one of the children- the child who didn't consider himself a reader- indicated that they read at home and at school. One child mentioned reading outside of the home and school saying that he also read the signs for directions to buy tickets when he went to the zoo. Mrs. Windsor also had "a take home reading program" wherein she had a variety of children's books which she encouraged children to take home and read.

> Field notes, October 31 : Mrs. Windsor informed me that her take home reading program is working quite well. She has a number of big books in envelopes. On the front of the envelope is a chart which is divided as follows :
> TITLE : DATE : SIGNATURE OF PARENT:
> She indicated that many of the children were subscribing to this program and a perusal of the information on the front of the envelopes indicated that some children were taking home quite a few of these books which were suitable for many of them to read independently.

I Like Reading (Generally)

All of the children interviewed indicated that they liked reading. Again, as with the children in Mrs. Anthony's class, there were provisos. One child indicated that although she liked reading, she didn't like reading "books about mice because I don't like mice." Another indicated that she didn't like reading books that contained "hard words". A third child said he didn't like reading poems "because we sing them in school every day". Two of the children indicated a preference for reading at home because it was quiet there, whereas in school, they thought it was too noisy.

Children also demonstrated that they liked reading through their engagement in and enthusiasm for certain texts. Two occasions stood out in this regard. The first was recorded in the fieldnotes,the second in the journal.

> October 17 : Teacher is reading There's A Mouse About The House. All of the children appear to be engrossed in the reading.

> October 31 : I saw evidence today of the power of certain books. When Mrs. Windsor read Brown Bear, Brown Bear, the enthusiasm was evident in the energy they were putting into the reading as they read with the teacher. Every one of them seemed "tuned in " to the reading.

Although the children generally reacted favourably to reading, on some occasions they expressed displeasure when the teacher suggested rereading a particular text. An example of this occurred when the children had just finished reading the recitation for the Christmas pageant and Mrs. Windsor suggested rereading. One child angrily shouted "no!" to indicate that she did not want to reread the recitation again.

The degree of synchronization between Mrs. Windsor's demonstration of concepts of reading and the children's concepts of reading varied from child to child. Donny, for example, in searching the illustration for cues to aid him in recognizing "exit" seemed to have transcended the advice that Mrs. Windsor usually offered to "sound out" unknown words. Similarly, Cheryl utilized context cues to identify "knocked" while Murray during the same episode attempted to sound out "knocked" and stuck with the strategy even when it did not work for him. Roger, with his concern about "compound words" and his attempts to sound out "white" on the label in the illustration, demonstrated acceptance of these perceptions promoted by Mrs. Windsor. Timmy, by failing to monitor his reading, was not incorporating in his reading the "reading makes sense" meaning that Mrs. Windsor had ascribed. Tony, on the other hand, reprimanded Murray for not "sounding out 'green dot'" and yet just previously had not employed the same strategy himself when confronted with the same words but instead had gone to the researcher and asked him to identify the words for him.Tony and Cheryl were high achieving children and they seemed to have developed broader meanings of reading and employed a wider range of strategies than had Murray and Roger, who were low achieving children.

Bondy's (1984) contention that meanings assigned to reading are the result of the interactions between the meanings children bring to the classroom and the meanings of reading displayed in the classroom was borne out, given the variety of meanings which children had constructed. The fact that Roger and Murray tended to use the more narrow definitions of reading (i.e reading is sounding out words) demonstrated by Mrs. Windsor supports a second contention of Bondy's that low achieving children are more likely to use narrow definitions of reading that are promoted by the teacher.

CHILDREN'S CONCEPTS OF BIG BOOKS

On only one occasion during the observation period did a child make reference to the format of a big book. While Mrs. Windsor was introducing Noisy Nora, she mentioned that she had put a small version of the story in the library for the children to take home. One child, obviously misinterpreting what Mrs. Windsor had said, remarked that the book was too big to take home.

During the interview, a representative sample of the formats of the books Mrs. Windsor had used was presented to the six children and they were asked to identify the books from the sample which was comprised as follows : At My House I Saw (sentence strips); Toys (a poem on language experience chart paper); Peterkin Meets A Star (a commercially published small book); Whose Mouse Are You ? (a teacher constructed big book) and Noisy Nora (a commercially published big book).

All of the children maintained that the texts on sentence strips and on the language experience chart were not books. Most of the children said that these weren't books because they didn't have pages. Two of the children also added that they were not books because they did not have any illustrations while two other children suggested that these were not books because they lacked covers. One high achieving child suggested that

because these two texts did not have the author's name on them, they were not books.

When asked if all of the texts would be read in the same way, two of the high achieving children said that they would, apparently keying on the process of reading. The other four children said that the texts would be read differently because the words were different in each one.

SUMMARY

Mrs. Windsor tended to involve children in sharing the reading of big books to a high degree. Somewhat paradoxically however, she insisted on turn taking within some texts and although the teacher reading alone was the least prominent form of reader participation, in such instances she insisted on reading alone. Although Mrs. Windsor read alone more in small books, there was much more flexibility and children could join in reading cooperatively with her as they pleased. Children were also observed to engage in both echo/mumble and completion reading in both big books and small books.

Specification questions were dominant in big books, small books and related activities. This was seen as reflecting Mrs. Windsor's emphasis on having children attend to text, presumably in an effort to have them remember it. Specification questions were more prominent in unfamiliar books and in related activities. Children posed more questions here than in Mrs. Anthony's class especially in big books and related activities. Their use of specification questions increased rather dramatically over time. They also tended to ask clarification questions in unfamiliar books, presumably to aid them in constructing meaning for these texts.

Acceptance/confirmation (which was frequently used by Mrs. Windsor to help sustain the lesson) and directions related to reading were prominent in big books and related activities. These interactions were

essentially procedural in nature. Prediction was also prominent in all three contexts, especially in relation to narratives. The children and Mrs. Windsor also engaged frequently in specification; again, this was seen as reflecting Mrs. Windsor's propensity to try to focus attention on text. Both the teacher and the children tended to help a child who was encountering difficulty in reading through prompting/cueing.

Although there was considerable attention to graphophonic information in big books, there was even more attention to this feature of reading in related activities. Mrs. Windsor also drew attention to print (i.e. words, phrases, etc.) in all three contexts. She also had children attend to illustrations in big books and small books, especially so when the books were unfamiliar, apparently indicating an intention on her part to have children use this medium to help them construct meaning of the books. Children engaged in book language in small books and to a lesser degree in related activities. Both the teacher and the children corrected miscues in sharing of big books and in related activities.

Mrs. Windsor demonstrated a number of concepts of reading. As in the case of Mrs. Anthony, her decision to use big book experiences as a means of helping children learn to read signified that reading makes sense. Children also displayed various concepts of reading, with some children displaying concepts which appeared to constrain them as readers while others displayed concepts which demonstrated a greater degree of flexibility.

CHAPTER VII

FURTHER UNDERSTANDING BIG BOOK EXPERIENCES

While Chapters IV, V and VI provide insights into the nature of shared big book experiences as provided by two grade one teachers, other factors need to be considered to provide a better understanding of what the shared big book experience actually entails. In this chapter, an attempt will be made to look at the larger big book context by comparing how the two environments described in Chapters IV, V and VI were alike and different. A second area needing consideration is the manner in which the sharing of big books in the classroom resembles the sharing of books in the home since it is on the basis of the knowledge of the latter that educators are promoting the use of big books in the schools. Finally a set of guidelines which have been abstracted from the classroom observations and which might be considered by those planning to implement a big book program will be given.

COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Commonalities

The context in which these two sets of big book experiences occurred exhibited many common characteristics, as did the participants. The school population, the class size, and the communities in which the students lived were all quite similar and the children came from a variety of ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds. In both classrooms children exhibited a wide range of reading abilities. Both teachers had access to approximately the same number of big books and both had been using big books for relatively the same length of time. Mrs. Anthony and Mrs. Windsor articulated a "whole language" orientation to the teaching of reading and they believed that the use of big books was an inherent part of this orientation.

The general organizational patterns of both sets of big book experiences were quite similar. That is, big book experiences usually involved shared readings of the books and similar accompanying related activities (eg minimal cues, cloze, recalling of specifics). In both cases, when big books were reread, it was usually done on the same day as the initial reading.

Various forms of reader participation (i.e. teacher reading alone, teacher and children reading cooperatively, children reading together as a group, and a single child reading alone) were evident in both sets of big book experiences, although there were some differences in the ratios of the different forms of reader participation and on some occasions Mrs. Windsor insisted on turn taking. Organizational routines and disciplinary procedures were similar in both contexts. In both classrooms, a considerable proportion of talk time was consumed by the teacher issuing directives (Browne, 1971).

The teachers usually selected the books in both classrooms and to some extent, themes guided the selection of the big books. Narratives, patterned language texts, and songs and verse were used by both teachers, although patterned language texts were more prominent in both contexts. Mrs. Anthony and Mrs. Windsor both used familiar and unfamiliar books. Multiple smaller versions of the big books were usually made by the teachers and were placed in the classroom libraries. In both classrooms, some of the big books were cooperatively written by the teacher and the children. There were a few commercially published big books available to both of the teachers and were supplemented by various formats of enlarged texts. In some instances the same book was used in both of the classrooms.

The overall focus in both instances was on text and print with some

emphasis on content. Memory of text seemed to be a major purpose for using big books, although some interactions which were seen as extending beyond the text were also evident.

Children usually sat close to the big books as they were being read in both classrooms. Both teachers encouraged the children to visually track the print as they were reading by pointing to the text.

Similar concepts of reading (eg. reading makes sense, reading means saying words, reading is precise, reading means sounding out words) were demonstrated by both teachers while children in both classrooms displayed varied and sometimes idiosyncratic concepts of reading. There was some overlap with the concepts of reading demonstrated by the teacher and the concepts of reading constructed by the children in both instances.

Differences

In Mrs. Windsor's classroom, shared reading of small books was integrated into big book experiences to a much greater degree than in Mrs. Anthony's classroom. In addition, whereas the whole class sharing the big book was the most prominent grouping arrangement in Mrs. Anthony's classroom, individual reading, paired reading and small group reading were more prevalent in Mrs. Windsor's classroom.

Children were nearly always permitted to overtly participate (Doake, 1981) in shared reading in Mrs. Anthony's class, wheras in some shared reading in Mrs. Windsor's class, such overt participation was discouraged. However, children were allocated more overall talk time in big book experiences in Mrs. Windsor's class. In addition, low achieving students were selected more frequently for participation by Mrs. Windsor while Mrs. Anthony selected high achieving children more frequently. More attention to graphophnic information was evident in the big book

experiences in Mrs. Windsor's class and she (and the children) utilized metalinguistic terminology more frequently than the participants in the other set of big book experiences. Furthermore,however, there was more evidence of "life to text" and "text to life" interactions (Cochran-Smith, 1984) in big book experiences in Mrs Windsor's class than there was in Mrs. Anthony' s class.

Considering the nature of the experiences across both classroom contexts gives a more extended picture of shared big books. While children experienced similar encounters in both contexts, there were also differences depending on the context being viewed. Thus, it may be concluded that shared big book experiences are not homogeneous events; rather, while they seem to involve a core of common activities, one may expect differences across contexts in terms of the delivery system which each teacher sets up to involve children in this experience.

HOME AND SCHOOL

Will children experience the same or similar kinds of involvement and interaction when sharing books at home and at school? The concept of big books was initially promoted so that the school could capture some of the experiences that occurred in the home. Some of the similarities and differences noted between homes as documented in research, and the classroom situations observed in this study are given below.

Similarities

One of the similarities between big book experiences and parent-child reading in the home was the visual accessibilty of the print and the illustrations to the children as the text was being read. That is, by choosing to use enlarged texts and by indicating through pointing that what was being said related to the graphic information on the page, Mrs. Anthony and Mrs. Windsor were replicating what parents do in the home

(Doake,1981; Holdaway,1979) and helping children develop this key insight into the reading process. As Clay (1979) pointed out, learning to visually track print is an essential skill that must be mastered in learning to read. In both classrooms, the children were encouraged to sit near the teacher and the book. By encouraging proximity to the book, the teachers were approximating the conditions in the home where the child sits in the parent's lap. Holdaway (1979) indicated that big books need to have a visual impact on the children and Mrs. Anthony and Mrs. Windsor attempted to insure this by seating the children close to the big books as they were being read.

The overt forms of reader participation (echo/mumble reading and completion reading) observed by Doake (1981) were also observed in both sets of big book experiences. In addition, various interactions (eg. questioning, specifying, elaborating, predicting) found in shared reading in the home (Hayden, 1985) were also evidenced in the classrooms.

Differences

An obvious difference between shared reading in the home and the big book experiences was the contexts in which they occurred. Whereas most of the research of reading in the home involved adult-child dyads, the contexts here were quite different in that there was only one adult sharing the reading with more than twenty children in each of the classrooms. In the home, the fact that there is only one child sharing the reading obviously allows for more interaction between that child and the adult reader than in the classroom context. Likewise, the one to one experience of reading in the home does not necessitate the same concern for control as in the one to many experience of reading in the classroom. In the big book experiences in the classroom, children are prone to be influenced by the strategies used by their peers in addition to those strategies

encouraged by the adult reader. In the home, however, the child is exposed only to those strategies demonstrated by the adult reader.

The purposes of the shared big book experiences in both classrooms also differed from the purposes for shared reading in the home. In both sets of big book experiences observed, the major purpose seemed to be that of having children remember the texts read and to teach them to recognize words and other so called "skills". Researchers have found however that parents who read to their children at home do not do so for the explicit purpose of teaching them to read. Rather they read to their children because of the pleasure both participants derive from the experience (Butler,1975; Clark, 1976; Doake,1981; Heath, 1982; Holdaway, 1979). That is, the social significance of the activity is predominant. Parents of course, do not have a mandate to teach their children to learn how to read whereas Mrs. Anthony and Mrs. Windsor did. Teachers are also subjected to various other sources of pressure to perform in certain ways. Spencer (1986) argued that many parents actually discourage teachers from emulating story reading in the home. Instead, she pointed out, many parents believe in and demand "structured, serious (even strenuous), disciplined, goal-directed activities" so that their "children will be inducted into literacy as the habit of work associated with good social behavior, and not into reading "stories " as a soft option where they please themselves" (p.449). Holdaway (1979) also pointed out the pressures brought to bear on teachers both by the school as an institution and by various other political and ideological factions. Thus it is possible that whether consciously or subconsciously, both teachers in this study were aware of the pressures and were reacting to them in their instruction program. Another explanation for the emphasis in both classrooms on remembering text and words may be due to the possibility that these

teachers still haven't "shaken" the traditional orientation to teaching reading. Both teachers encountered a new philosophy of reading in the last few years-a rather short time to develop a cohesive and consistent set of beliefs separate from those previously held. A study by Morris (1985) of whole language teachers at a fifth grade level showed that some aspects of their interactions during teaching reading, particularly questioning, was strongly influenced by traditional philosophy. Park (1982) also noted the inclination of teachers to interweave traditional methods into more recent phenomena like sharing big books.

Selection of the books was the perogative of the teachers in both of the classrooms observed. This contrasts with the findings of research in shared reading in the home where it has been found that children are frequently permitted to select what is to be read. Doake (1981), for example found that children requested and were permitted to engage in repeated readings of their favourite books. However, in the big book experiences observed, children did not select books and the books tended to be reread (sometimes several times) on the same day at the teacher's request; books were not recycled in the manner in which they were in Doake's study and which Holdaway (1979), the originator of the big book experience, regarded as essential. Although children appeared to especially enjoy some books (eg Brown Bear, Brown Bear) there was no evidence of a particular book becoming a favourite of any of the children.

Related activities were a prominent part of the big book experiences in both classrooms. That children do engage in supportive print related activities prior to coming to school has been documented in the literature (Baghban, 1984; Clarke, 1976; Doake, 1981; Durkin, 1966; Harste, Woodward and Burke, 1984; Taylor, 1983). However, there are qualitative differences in the activities engaged in by the children prior to coming to

school and by the children in the two sets of big book experiences being described. In the homes, such activities were embedded in the daily lives of the children and their parents (Taylor,1983). For example, the children in these studies did not write notes to learn how to write notes or to learn more about print; they wrote notes to communicate with another person. However, in the big book experiences observed, related activities tended to focus specifically on text (print) for the purpose of having children learn more about print. Slaughter et al. (1986) referred to such a focus as "the dead weight" of literacy learning (p.40). King (1985) commented on the decontextualized manner in which learning is expected to occur in schools.

> A serious problem in extending language and literacy in schools arises from the fact that so much of the content of learning has been decontextualized. That is, reading , writing and various other skills have been removed from the world of experience and practise exercises put in their place (p. 35).

Cochran-Smith (1984) found that in the nursery school classroom which she observed, children were not expected to learn about print in a decontextualized manner. She reported:

> Print was interwoven into social interaction not in order to create convenient opportunities for teaching literacy skills but because print was an effective way for the adults and children in this community to fulfill a variety of social, transactional, and informational needs in everyday life (p.3)

Implicit in the research on learning to read in the home is the notion of the role that reading narratives plays in the development of this ability. Meek (1982), for example, proposed that "a story is an experience a child can carry in his head". In arguing for the role that stories play in learning to read, she argued "that most of us learned to read by recognizing on the page what we could already repeat to ourselves"(p.25). In a study investigating parent-child interaction in favourite and unfamiliar stories, Hayden (1985) found that the 27 preschool children in her study all

selected a narrative as a favourite text.

Goodman (1980) described the role narratives play in emergent reading. "Wholistic remembering", she maintained,"is a significant stage of reading development and it is not simple remembering"(p.9). Goodman saw narratives as a vehicle through which "wholistic remembering" is facilitated, since as she pointed out (and others such as Applebee (1978) have shown), children early on internalize a sense of "storyness"(p.9).

Cochran-Smith (1984) also argued that through exposure to narratives, children develop "story schemata" which aid them in their attempts to construct meaning as they read. She concluded that the nursery school teacher in her study helped facilitate the children's development as readers.

Although some narratives were read by both teachers, there was a lack of what Gordon and Braun (1983) referred to as an "ideal" narrative. That is, the narratives that were read generally had a weak story structure. Patterned language texts were more prominent in both sets of big book experiences observed. Although there is obviously a need to use such texts with their cyclical and repetitive language (Doake,1981; Goodman, 1986; Holdaway, 1979), narratives lacked the relative prominence that they play in the home.

CONSIDERATIONS

In light of the observations described in this study, the findings of researchers who have investigated parent/ child reading in the home, and the theoretical considerations offered by Holdaway, the following guiding principles are offered for consideration in implementing a program using big books to teach children to read. This study describes shared big book experiences as operationalized by 2 teachers. While many of the practices were consistent with the knowledge framework set forth by Holdaway

(1979), some practices still reflected a more traditional view of teaching reading within which the basal reader was a key element.

1. Children's overt participation in the reading which was observed in both classrooms seems very similar to that which occurs in learning to read in the home (Doake, 1981). When big books are being shared, it is essential that such participation be encouraged.

2. In addition to teacher and children sharing the reading in big book experiences, other interactions (eg. questioning, clarifying, predicting) as observed in this study, further enhanced the shared reading experiences. If the big book philosophy is to be actualized, teachers need to consider permitting, and indeed encouraging such interactions to allow for what Cochran-Smith (1984) referred to as the negotiation of text.

3. There is need to consider text genre when selecting big books. This is consistent with Holdaway's (1979) recommendation that children be exposed to a variety of genre types.

4. Consideration also needs to be given to the pattern in which books are read to children. To an extent, themes guided the selection of texts in the two sets of big book experiences observed and an organization around themes would seem one possibility.

5. Familiarity/unfamiliarity of the books should also guide selection of big books. This of course may be idiosyncratic to each classroom and will depend on the amount of exposure the children in individual classrooms have had to books, the type of the book, and the specific purpose(s) for which it is being used.

6. There is need to examine what type of related activities are used in conjunction with big books. This of course relates to the teacher's purposes for using big books. If related activities are to function according to a big book philosophy, there is need to design such activities

to encourage children's creativity. There is also need to attempt to insure that such activities demonstrate meaningful and functional uses of print, and writing should be an integral part of these activities.

7. The rereading of big books needs to be considered in light of the findings from parent/child reading in the home and in light of Holdaway's (1979) recommendation that books be recycled over the course of a year. Rereading of books so that children develop memory of the texts has been identified as having a prominent role to play in learning to read. However, the frequency with which big books are reread, whether all big books need to be reread, and whether they must be reread under the teacher's direction need to be considered.

8. Consideration should be given to encouraging children to help in the selection of books to be read and/or reread. This would seem to be consistent with what has been shown to happen in the home and should encourage children to develop favourite books which they would read independently.

9. The big book philosophy, as articulated by Holdaway is based on the developmental principle that learning to read, like learning other developmental tasks is a gradual process wherein learning is achieved by participation in the task and where there is movement from rough approximation toward gradual refinement of the process. Therefore teachers need to recognize that children who are learning to read through shared big book experiences may not exhibit exactitude in reading and indeed approximation of text is a necessary and expected developmental stage.

10. The big book philosophy is founded on the premise that meaning is the impetus which motivates children to make sense of print. In this regard, the semantic content of the big book should be considered as the

focus and should supercede attention to word recognition and graphophonic elements.

11. Although it is recognized that teachers have a mandate for teaching children to learn how to read, consideration should also be given to reading some big books for pleasure or what Rosenblatt (1980) referred to as "asthetic reading". That is, the purpose for reading would not be on what is to be learned by reading the text but on the pleasure derived from the experience.

12. In recognition of the constraints placed on the teacher when reading to a large group of children, the possibility of having parent volunteers share the reading of big books with smaller groups of children might be considered.

13. As was sometimes done in Mrs. Windsor's class, children who are more proficient readers could be encouraged to read big books to others in large group, small group, and paired reading situations.

14. Mrs. Anthony and Mrs. Windsor both engaged children in cooperatively composing big books. This might also be considered both as a means of demonstrating the reading-writing connection to children and as a means of increasing the number of big books available for sharing.

15. There is need to consider making multiple smaller versions of big books that are readily available for children to read independently both at home and in school.This was observed in both classrooms in this study.

16. To implement a big book program, teachers need to develop an overall plan considering the number of big books available, the approximate sequence in which they could be developed, the variety of genre to which the children might be exposed, the roles which the various participants may adopt (e.g. children sometimes taking responsibility for rereading and sometimes rereading independently of the teacher), and the

various goals for which big books may be used. Furthermore, flexibility is necessary to accommodate both child input and children's needs as determined by the teacher.

17. Finally, developing a new philosophy, like reading itself, is a gradual process. Teachers, and educators responsible for preservice and inservice education, should realize that past beliefs cannot be discarded overnight nor can new beliefs be acquired through a single workshop experience. Practice and theory should be interspersed at all steps along the way. Teachers need to know not only the what of classroom practice but also the why. In this way teachers develop control over methodology as it reflects beliefs. This knowledge framework gives teachers the know-how to supplement, modify, and improvise while being consistent with the theoretical principles on which the practices such as sharing big books are based.

These considerations are not intended as a prescription to be followed but rather as guidelines which might be considered by those using or advocating the use of big books. The writer also realizes that there are many other factors which impact on the day to day realities of teachers but which have not been been considered here.

CHAPTER VIII

This chapter begins with a general overview of the study. Implications for further research, and for teachers and other educators are then discussed. Limitations of the study are presented, as well as a concluding remark.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The overall purpose of this study was to describe and interpret the interactions which occurred within shared big book experiences in two grade one classrooms. Two classrooms where big book experiences formed the core of the beginning reading program were selected and the researcher recorded and observed such interactions two days per week in each of the classrooms over most of the first term of the school year. A coding system was developed based on the data and past research and eight broad categories of interactions emerged. Using these categories as a framework, the data from each of the two sets of big books were then analyzed, described and interpreted. This analysis revealed that a big book experience does not simply involve the teacher reading a big book with children. A shared big book experience usually involves two types of activities: there is the sharing of the big book itself and related skills/language that accompany the big books. In one of the classrooms observed, shared reading of small books was also a part of big book experiences. In addition, the sequence is variable in terms of which activity precedes and follows. Variable also is the format of the big book - from commercially published big books to enlarged print from an overhead projector.

In both classrooms observed, the overall purpose for using big books was similar - to focus on remembering text. While many of the interactions engaged in by the teacher and children were similar across

classrooms, there were often differences in terms of which interactions tended to dominate.

A comparison between the data of this study and shared reading as it occurs in the home (based on its documentation in the literature) indicated that while commonalities exist across home and school contexts, because of many factors, there were also substantive differences. Sixteen general principles were abstracted out and offered as considerations in implementing a shared big book reading program.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

To expand upon the findings from this study and to develop further insights into the role of big books in children's initiation into reading, the following suggestions, which might guide future research, are offered.

1. The big book experiences described in this study occurred during the initial portion of a school year. Further research might be extended over a whole year to determine if interactions change as children's competence as readers and teacher's knowledge of the children further develop.
2. Grade one teachers have a mandate to begin teaching children to read through "formal" reading programs. There is also pressure for children to achieve in reading according to externally imposed standards, once they have begun such "formal" programs. Thus, a study of big book experiences in a less formal setting (e.g. Kindergarten, nursery school) where there is less pressure for uniformity in achievement should prove to be valuable.
3. The big book experiences described in this study occurred in two "regular" grade one classrooms where : (1) children exhibited various achievement levels in reading, and (2) the teachers were somewhat constrained by relatively large numbers of students and

by having to follow a prescribed curriculum. Research in other settings where big books are used and where one or more of these characteristics are not evident (e.g. enrichment classes, E.S.L. classes, resource rooms) could be undertaken.

4. Big books are a relatively recent phenomenon and as a consequence teachers have had relatively little time to acquire an extensive collection of big books and to develop the philosophical orientation which the use of big books entails. Research is needed to study the nature of teachers' philosophies, the length of time they have been using big books, and the manner in which they present big books to children.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND OTHER EDUCATORS

1. Effectively implementing big book experiences requires that a variety of factors need to be considered and simply using big books as a medium through which to teach children a list of skills will not suffice. Some guiding principles which teachers and educators should consider are outlined in Chapter VII.

2. Since the big book experience is based largely on the research on how children learn to read at home and on modern language theory, it is essential that teachers develop an understanding of this knowledge in order to effectively utilize big book experiences. Therefore, curriculum developers and inservice educators who advocate the use of big books need to help teachers develop this knowledge so that teachers can operate within a knowledge framework rather than reducing the utilization of big books to a series of techniques.

3. To develop this philosophical orientation, teachers will require adequate time, inservice opportunities, and access to resource

people. This necessarily entails a longitudinal and sustained approach to inservice education.

4. At the preservice level, prospective teachers need exposure to modern theories of reading such as is encapsulated in shared big book experiences. Given the relative lack of required course-work in reading at the undergraduate level in teacher education programs across Canada (Fagan and Malicky,1984) this might indicate a need to expand the requirements for coursework in the teaching of reading in these programs.

5. Commercially published big books are currently quite expensive to purchase and it is very time consuming for teachers to construct an adequate number of big books for a beginning reading program. Administrators, at various levels, who advocate the use of big books need to provide sufficient financial resources to allow teachers to purchase some commercially published big books, as well as to provide materials to construct additional books. Teachers and principals should also consider using parents and other volunteers to aid them in constructing these additional books.

6. Publishers need to be more aware of the genre of the big books which they publish. While patterned language tends to be enjoyed by very young children, children of school age should be given more opportunity to interact with narrative and more books of this genre should be made available.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While an honest attempt has been made to describe and interpret the data of this study, an understanding of the findings needs to be qualified by a number of limiting factors that occurred throughout the study.

1. At various times during the data collection, some children were

outside the range of both the video and the audio recording equipment. Thus some of the interactions which occurred might not have been recorded nor observed by the researcher.

2. The researcher spent two days a week in each of the classrooms. It is conceivable that on the other days when the researcher was not present, additional big books were used. The present data are interpreted without regard for such interactions.

3. A further limitation, especially comparing contexts, was Mrs. Anthony's decision to curtail the observations in her classroom two weeks earlier than was originally intended.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Larry (introductory quote, Chapter I) and the many other children who are not successfully initiated into reading through traditional reading programs in the school served as key motivators for the researcher to examine an alternative approach of helping children learn to read. This alternative approach centers around the shared big book experience. It was apparent from this study, that some of the features of the highly successful shared reading experiences in the home could be emulated in the classroom context. While the classroom can never serve as substitute for the home, it seems possible that additional qualities of parent-child interactions may be reflected in the classroom. It is hoped that the knowledge gained through this study will help educators allow future Larrys to gain entry into the world of reading more successfully.

REFERENCES

Allington, E.L. (1978). Are good readers and poor readers taught differently? Is that why poor readers are poor readers? . Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Applebee, A.N. (1978). The child's concept of story . Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ausubel, D.P. (1959). Viewpoints from related disciplines: Human growth and development. Teachers' College Record, 60, 245-254.

Baghban, M. (1984). Our daughter learns to read and write. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Bloome, D. (1980). Capturing reading in schools and community: A methodology for sociolinguistic ethnography . Paper presented at the Ethnography in Education Research Forum, University of Pennsylvania.

Bloome, D. (1981). Reading and writing in a classroom: A sociological ethnography. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Bloome, D. (1986). Building literacy and the classroom community. Theory Into Practice , 25, 71-76 .

Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S.K. (1982). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods . Toronto: Allyn, Bacon.

Bondy, E. (1985). Children's definitions of reading: Products of an interactive process. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago .

Brailsford, A. (1985). Kindergarten children's literacy experiences. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta.

Browne, M.P. (1971). An exploratory study of teacher-pupil interactions in primary reading groups. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta .

Butler, D. (1975). Cushla and her books. Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton.

Butler, D., & Clay, M. (1979). Reading begins at home. Auckland, New Zealand: Heinemann Educational Books.

Cattel, J.M. (1886). The time it takes to see and name objects. Mind, 13, 37-51.

Cazden, C. (1981). Social context of learning to read. In J.T. Guthrie (Ed.), Comprehension and teaching: Research reviews. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Chall, J.S. (1967). Learning to read: The great debate. New york: McGraw-Hill.

Clark, M. (1976). Young fluent readers. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Clay, M. (1979). Reading: The patterning of a complex behaviour. Auckland, New Zealand: Heinemann Educational Books.

Cochran-Smith, M. (1983). Reading stories to children: A review-critique. In B.A. Hutson (Ed.), Advances in reading language research. Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press Inc.

Cochran-Smith, M. (1984). The making of a reader . Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Company .

Dewey, J. (1963). Experience and education . New York: Collier Books .

Denizen, N.K. (1978). The research act: A theoretical guide to sociological methods . Chicago: Aldene .

Dillon,D. & Searle,D. The role of language in one first grade classroom. Research in the Teaching of English , 15, 311-328.

Doake, D. (1981). Book experience and emergent reading behaviour. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta.

Donaldson, M. (1978). Children's minds. Glasgow: William Collins and Sons.

Durkin, D. (1966). Children who read early. New York: Teachers' College Press.

Durkin, D. (1983). Teaching them to read. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Dyson, A.H., & Genishi, C. (1983). Children's language for learning. Language Arts, 60, 751-757.

Ehri, L.C. (1979). Linguistic insight: Threshold of reading acquisition. In T. Walker & G. Mackinnon (Eds.), Reading research: Advances in theory and practice . New York: Academic Press.

Ehri, L.C. (1985,April). Learning to read and spell . Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Erickson, F., & Shultz, J. (1977). When is a context? Some issues and methods in the analysis of social competence. Quarterly Newsletter of the Institute for Comparative Human Development, 1, 5-12.

Fagan, W.T., & Malicky, G. (1984). Reading staff in elementary education . Unpublished manuscript, University of Alberta .

Farr, R., & Weintraub, S. (1974). Methodological incarceration. Reading Research Quarterly ,10,(no page available).

Feinberg, W., & Soltis, J. (1985). School and society . New York: Teachers College Press .

Feuerstein, R., & Hoffman, M. (1984). Intergenerational conflict of rights: Cultural imposition and self-realization. Unpublished manuscript.

Feuerstein, R., Rand, Y., Hoffman, M., & Miller, R. (1980). Instumental enrichment. New York: University Park Press.

Flesch, R. (1955). Why Johnny can't read. New York: Harper & Row.

Forrester, A. (1977). What teachers can learn from "natural readers". Reading Teacher, 31, 160-166.

Gallagher, T.M. (1981). Contingency query sequences within adult-child discourse. Journal of Child Language ,8, 51-62.

Garvey, C. (1977). The contingency query: A dependent act in conversation. In M. Lewis & R. Rosenblum (Eds.), Interaction, conversation, and the development of language . New York: Wiley.

Gates, A.I., & Bond, G.L. (1936). Reading readiness: A study of factors determining success and failure in beginning reading. Teachers' College Record, 37, 679-685.

Goodman, K.S. (1970) Reading: a psycholinguistic guessing game. In H. Singer & R. Ruddell (Eds.), Theoretical models and processes of reading . Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Goodman, K.S. (1973). Psycholinguistic universals in the reading process. In F Smith (Ed.), Psycholinguistics and reading . New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston .

Goodman, K.S. (1982). Manifesto for a reading revolution. In F.V. Gollasch (Ed.), Language and literacy: The selected writings of Kenneth S. Goodman. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Goodman, K.S. (1986). What's whole in whole language . Richmond Hill, Ontario: Scholastic .

Goodman, K.S., & Goodman, Y. (1979). Learning to read is natural. In L.B. Resnick & P.A. Weaver (Eds.), Theory and practice of early reading. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Erlbaum.

Goodman, Y. (1980). The roots of literacy . Paper presented at the Claremont Reading Conference, Claremont, California .

Gordon, C., & Braun, C. (1983). Using story schema as an aid to reading and writing. The Reading Teacher , 37, 116-121

Gough, P.B. (1972). One second of reading. In J.F. Kavanagh and I.G. Maltingly (Eds.), Language by ear and by eye. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Greene, J.L. (1983, April). Lesson construction and student participation. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec.

Greene, J.L., & Wallat, C. (1983, April). A descriptive system for sociolinguistic ethnography. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec.

Gumperz, J.J. (1972). Verbal strategies in multilingual communication. In Georgetown University Round Table on Language and Linguisitics 1970. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Guthrie, L.L., & Hall, W.S. (1984). Ethnographic approaches to reading research. In P.D. Pearson (Ed.), Handbook of reading research (pp. 91-110). New York : Longman, Inc.

Harste, J., Burke, C., & Woodward, J. (1981). Children, their language and world: Initial encounters with print. Final report to the National Institute of Education.

Harste, J., Woodward, V., & Burke, C. (1984). Language stories and literacy lessons. Portsmouth, New Hampshire : Heinemann Educational Books.

Hayden, R. (1985). Clarification strategies within joint book interactions. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta.

Hayden, H.M.R., & Fagan, W.T. (1983). Clarification strategies in joint book reading. First Language, 4, 131-142.

Heath, S.B. (1982a). Questioning at home and at school. In G. Spindler (Ed.), Doing the ethnography of schooling. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Heath, S.B. (1982b). What no bedtime story means: narrative skills at home and at school. Language in Society, 11, 49-77.

Hewitt, G. (1982) A critique of research methods in the study of reading comprehension. British Educational Research Journal, 8.

Holdaway, D. (1979). Foundations of literacy. Sydney, Australia: Ashton Scholastic.

Holdaway, D. (1981). Shared book reading: Teaching reading using favourite books. Theory into Practice, 21, 293-300.

Huck, C.S. (1979). Children's literature in the elementary school. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Huey, E.B. (1908). The psychology and pedagogy of reading. New York: MacMillan and Company.

Hunter-Grundin, E. (1979). Literacy: A systematic start. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers.

Johnson, P.H., & Winograd, P.N. (1983). Passive failure in reading. Paper presented at the National Reading Conference, Austin, Texas.

Juliebo, M. (1985). The literacy world of five young children. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta.

Kamil, M.L. (1984). Current traditions of reading research. In P.D. Pearson (Ed.), Handbook of reading research (pp. 39-62). New York : Longman, Inc.

King, M.L. (1985). Language and learning for child watchers. In A. Jaggar & M.T. Smith-Burke (Eds.), Observing the language learner. Newark, Delaware : International Reading Association.

Kontos, S. (1981). The metacognitive environment : characteristics and relationships for preschool children. Paper presented to the Society for Research in Child Development, Boston.

LaBerge, D., & Samuels, S.J. (1974). Towards a theory of automatic information processing in reading. Cognitive Psychology, 6, 293-323.

Langer, J.A. (1985). Musings. Research in the Teaching of English, 19, 117-119.

Lass, B. (1983). Portrait of my son as an early reader II. The Reading Teacher, 36, 508-515.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Beverly Hills : Sage Publications.

Mandler, J.M., & Johnson, N.S. (1977). Remembering things parsed : Story structure and recall. Cognitive Psychology, 10, 111-151.

Martin,R. G. (1985). Why Johnny Canuck can't read. The Edmonton Sun, 8.

Mattingly, I.G. (1972). Reading, the linguisitic process, and linguisitic awareness. In J.F. Kavanagh and I. G. mattingly (Eds.), Language by ear and by eye. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

McDermott, R.P. (1977). Social relations as contexts for learning in school. Harvard Educational Review, 47, 198-213.

McDermott, R.P. (1978). Pirandello in the classroom: On the possibility of equal educational opportunity in American culture. In M.C. Reynolds (Ed.), Futures of exceptional children: Emerging structures. Reston, Va.: Council for Exceptional Children.

McMillan, J.H., & Schumacher, S. (1984). Research in education: a conceptual introduction. Toronto : Little, Brown and Company.

Meek, M. (1982). Learning to read. London: The Bodley Head.

Mehan, H.C. (1979). Learning lessons. Cambridge, Massachusetts : Harvard University Press.

Moffett, J., & Wagner, B.J. (1983). Student-centered language arts and reading, K-3. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Morphett, M.V., & Washburne, C. (1931). When should children begin to read? Elementary School Journal, 31, 496-503.

Morris, R. (1985). The nature of teachers' questioning and theoretical orientations to reading in grade five classrooms. Unpublished masters thesis, University of Alberta.

Mosenthal, P. (1983). The influence of social situations on children's classroom comprehension of text. The Elementary School Journal, 83, 537-547.

Nikiforuk, A. (1982). Why our kids can't read. Quest, September, 1982.

Owens, R.G. (1982). Methodological rigour in naturalistic inquiry: Some issues and answers. Educational Administration Quarterly, 18, 1-21.

Park, B. (1982). The big book trend - a discussion with Don Holdaway. Language Arts, 59, 815-820.

Pearson, P.D. (1985). Changing the face of reading comprehension instruction. Reading Teacher, 38, 724-737.

Rhodes, L.K. (1981). I can't read! Predictable books as resources for reading and writing instruction. Reading Teacher, 34, 511-518.

Robinson, H.A. (1984). Reading instruction and research: In historical perspective. In A.J. Harris and E.R. Sipay (Eds.), Readings on reading instruction. New York: Longman Inc.

Rosenblatt, L.M. (1980). What facts does this poem teach you? Language Arts, 57, 386-394.

Roth, R. (1980, April). A study of the meanings ten children take from the schooling process as they are taught to read in the first grade : A preliminary report. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston.

Rummelhart, D.E. (1978). Understanding and summarizing brief stories. In D. Laberge & S.J. Samuels (Eds.), Basic processes in reading: Perception and comprehension. Hillsdale, New Jersey : Ablex.

Schonell, F.J. (1961). The psychology and teaching of reading. New York: Philosophical Library.

Shuh, J.H.C. (1980). The shared book experience. Journal of Education, 6, 1-5.

Slaughter, J.P. (1983). Big books for little kids. Reading Teacher, 36, 758-761.

Slaughter, H.B., Haussler, M.M., Franks, A.S., Jilbert, K.A., & Silentman, I.J. (1985). Contextual differences in oral and written discourse during early literacy instruction. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Smith, F. (1975). Comprehension and learning. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Smith, F. (1976). Learning to read by reading. Language Arts, 53, 297-299, 322.

Smith, F. (1982). Understanding reading. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Snow, C. (1983). Literacy and language: relationships during the preschool years. Harvard Educational Review, 53, 165-189.

Spencer, M. (1986). Emergent literacies: A site for analysis. Language Arts, 63, 442-453.

Stein, N., & Glenn, C. (1977). An analysis of story comprehension in elementary school children. In R. Freedle (Ed.), Discourse processing: Multidisciplinary perspectives in discourse processing. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Ablex.

Taylor, D. (1983). Family literacy. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Teale, W.H.C. (1982). Toward a theory of how children learn to read naturally. Language Arts, 59, 555-569.

Thorndyke, P.W. (1977). Cognitive structure in comprehension and memory of narrative structure. Cognitive Psychology ,9,77-110.

Torrey, J.W. (1973). Learning to read without a teacher: A case study. In F. Smith (Ed.), Psycholinguisitics and reading. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Tovey, D., & Kerber, J.E. (1986) Roles in literacy learning: A new perspective. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association .

Van Kleeck, A., & Gunter, C. D. (1982). Mothers' strategies for eliciting clarification information from their children. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Venezky, R.L. (1984). The history of reading research. In P.D. Pearson (Ed.), Handbook of reading research (pp.3-38). New York: Longman,Inc.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). Mind in society : The development of higher psychological processes. In N. Cole, V. J. Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman (Eds.). Cambridge, Massachusetts : Harvard University Press.

Windsor, R. (1981). Oral reading: Then and now. Alabama Reader, 8, 49-52.

APPENDIX A

GUIDING QUESTIONS

The following questions were generated to guide the researcher's observations. They are grouped under the headings : interactions with teacher-child dyadic relationships, interactions within a teacher - whole group situation, interactions within a teacher - high/low achieving student relationships, big book characteristics, and trends.

A. Interactions With Teacher-Child Dyadic Relationships

1. What is the average number of interactions per shared book experience and what is the range of interactions across experiences?
2. Who most frequently initiates such interactions?
3. How are interactions initiated? Are they
   - statement of information?
   - request questions?
   - directives?
4. What is the nature of responses during interactions?
   - scaffolding?
   - transcendence?
   - clarification?
   - confirmation?
   - regulation of behaviour?
5. Do the children engage in
   - mumble reading?
   - echo reading?
   - completion reading?
6. (a)Do children or the teacher engage in rereading big books?
   (b)Who initiates such rereading?
7. Do children or the teacher use "booklike" language in oral responses?
8. Does the teacher focus on print?
   How?(holistic-directionality, eye-voice tracking, words/parts)
9. Does the teacher focus on meaning? How?
10. (a)How does the teacher negotiate meaning? (Relevance and familiarity of topics to children's schemata, monitoring their knowledge)
    (b) Does the teacher utilize positive accountability?

11. Do the children display a sense of narrative?

12. Does the teacher attempt to develop a sense of narrative?

13. (a)Do the children seem to display a particular concept of reading?
(b) How is this concept of reading being influenced by the teacher?

14. (a)What is the nature of the responses being utilized by the children?
(b)Where and how are these obtained?

15. How might the children's attitude toward reading be described?

B. Interactions Within A Teacher-Whole Group Situation

16. How are any of the previous interactions affected by the large group situation?

17. What common patterns of interactions occur?

18. Are some children chosen to interact more often than others? If so, what factors seem to influence these choices?

19. Do some children try to dominate such interactions? If so, how does this influence the interactions?

20. Does the teacher develop organizational routines?

21. Does the teacher extend the shared book experience to include related language activities (drama, writing, etc.)?

C.Interactions Within A Teacher - High/Low Achieving Student Relationships

22. Does the teacher differentiate between children perceived as high and low achievers in literacy knowledge in terms of,
(a) the number of interactions?
(b) the type of interactions? If so, how?
(c) permitting children to initiate interactions?
(d) the meaning ascribed to the shared reading experience?

Interactions of high and low achieving children will be observed in terms of whether teachers :
(1) give less able children the answer or shift questions to another child.
(2) reward inappropriate answers or behaviour of less successful children.
(3) criticize less successful children more often for failure.
(4) praise less successful children less frequently for success.
(5) do not give feedback to public responses of less able children.

(6) pay less attention to and interact less with with less successful children.
(7) wait less time for the less successful children to answer.
(8) seat less successful children farther away from the teacher.
(9) demand less from less successful children.
(10) interact in a less friendly manner with less able children.
(11) provide briefer and less informative feedback to less successful students' questions.
(12) use less effective, but time consuming methods of instruction when time is limited.

D. Big Book Characteristics

23. What are the titles of the big books?

24. What is the text structure of the big books (narrative, nursery rhyme, song, etc.)

25. Are the big books familiar or unfamiliar?

26. How are the big books selected?

27. Are the big books accessible to the children after the session?

28. Are the quality and quantity of interactions within a shared book experience influenced by the nature of the text (narrative, nursery rhyme, etc.)?

E. Trends

29. Do interactions within shared reading experiences observed at the beginning of the study differ quantitatively and qualitatively from the interactions observed in shared reading experiences at the end of the study?

APPENDIX B

October 1, 1985

Dear Parent :

This year your child's teacher Mrs. _____ is using shared big book experiences as part of the beginning grade one program. This method of teaching children to read, while showing much potential, is relatively new. I am a doctoral student in reading at the University of Alberta and as part of my research, I am hoping to gather information as to how children learn to read through this approach to teaching beginning reading. The information that I gather will add to our knowledge of beginning reading and should be beneficial to the university, to teachers, and of course, to young children who are in the process of learning to read. Both Mr. _____, the school principal, and Mrs. _____ have agreed to participate in the study. Permission has been obtained from the school board.

I plan to work in Mrs. _____ classroom for approximately two mornings each week for an eight week period this fall. Plans are to videotape the shared book activity. The information collected will be completely confidential and the names of the school, the teacher, and the children will be anonymous. The focus is not on specific children but on the nature of the learning activity and their participation.

I would appreciate it if you would complete the enclosed permission form and return it to the school by October 5, 1985. If you require further information, you can contact me at 432-3840 (university) or 434-9929 (home).

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation to you for your cooperation in this learning venture.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Anderson

APPENDIX C

RELEASE FORM

With full consent I hereby authorize Jim Anderson and the University of Alberta, Faculty of Graduate Studies, to make and reproduce such audio and /or visual recordings of my minor child, _____, whether by still photograph, motion picture film, videotape or other mechanical device as may be available to record his/her activities.

I acknowledge that all such recordings are the sole property of the University of Alberta for its general use and educational purposes.

In signing this form, I hereby release the University of Alberta, its representatives and all successors and assigns from any and all liability, demand or damage claims of every nature and kind arising out of or connected in any way with these recordings.

SUBJECT TITLE: Shared Big Book Experiences

DATE: October 14 - December 13

LOCATION: _____

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

WITNESS: _____

APPENDIX D

Descriptions of Pictures Used During Interviews With Children

PICTURE I : In this picture a boy of about ten is lying prone in a hammock reading a book. He has a baseball cap on and a baseball is underneath the hammock. Off to the right of the hammock lies a baseball bat.

PICTURE II : This is a picture of a boy sitting alone on the steps of a large building (possibly a library) reading a book. He is at a distance from the camera.

PICTURE III : This is a picture of a line-up at the check-out counter of a supermarket. A man is having his groceries checked in. There are approximately a dozen loaves of white bread and a carton of milk on the counter.

PICTURE IV: This is a close-up picture of a cat peering through a pair of binoculars which are mounted on a stand. An open book also stands, resting against the binoculars stand. Both the print and the pictures of birds in the book are not in focus.

PICTURE V: In this picture, a lady, a boy of 10-12 and a dog stand in front of a counter in what appears to be a veterinary clinic. Another lady stands behind a counter. The boy holds the dog on a leash. The lady in front of the counter holds a clipboard in her left hand and a pen in her right. She appears to be about to sign (or has just signed) the

form. On the front of the counter is a sign with the words PLEASE MAKE APPOINTMENT printed in fairly large letters. Underneath these words, printed in much smaller letters are the words APPOINTMENTS SEEN BEFORE WALK-INS!

PICTURE VI: A boy and two girls (age approximately 5 or 6) are in the foreground of what appears to be a room in a school or playschool. They each hold an inflated balloon, nearly as large as themselves, over their heads. The balloon which the boy on the left holds has a face, a bow tie, arms and legs. It has a large C on its body and a smaller C on its left arm. The balloon held by the girl in the center has a more human like appearance. It has a large A which covers most of its front body and extends down its legs. In its right hand is a smaller piece of plastic with a much smaller A imprinted on it. The balloon held by the girl on the right is a rotund body with short stubby feet and legs. Nearly the whole of the body is taken up by a huge smile. Superimposed on the smile is a large T.